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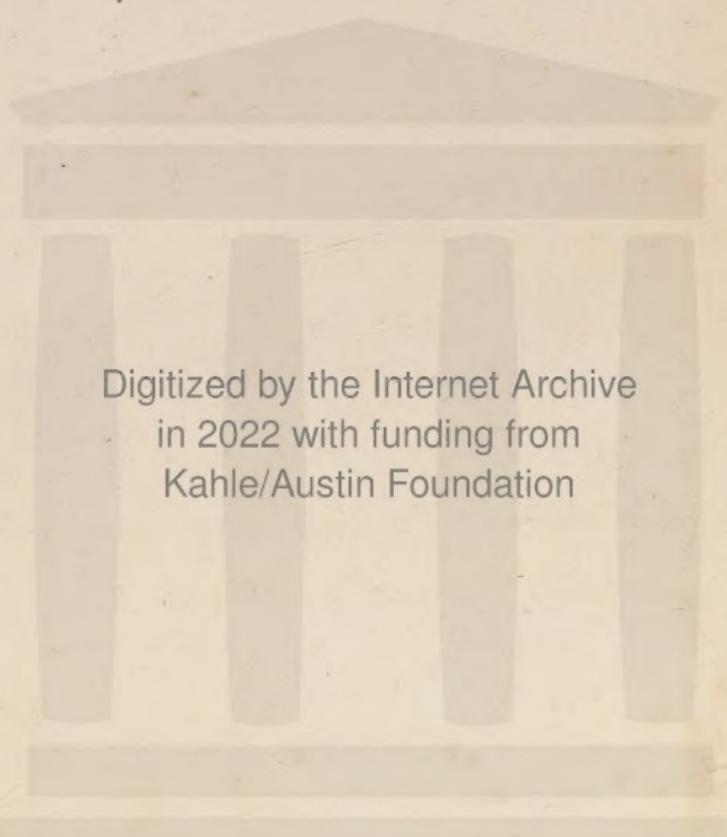
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THE  
**GOSPEL ADVOCATE,**

*AUGUST, 1836—JULY, 1837,*

INCLUSIVE.

Oportet in eâ re maximè, in quâ vitæ ratio veritatur, sibi  
quemque confidere, suoque judicio, ac propriis sensibus niti ad  
investigandam et perpendendam veritatem, quám credentem  
alienis erroribus decipi tanquam ipsum rationis experit.

LACTANTIUS.

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VOL. IV.

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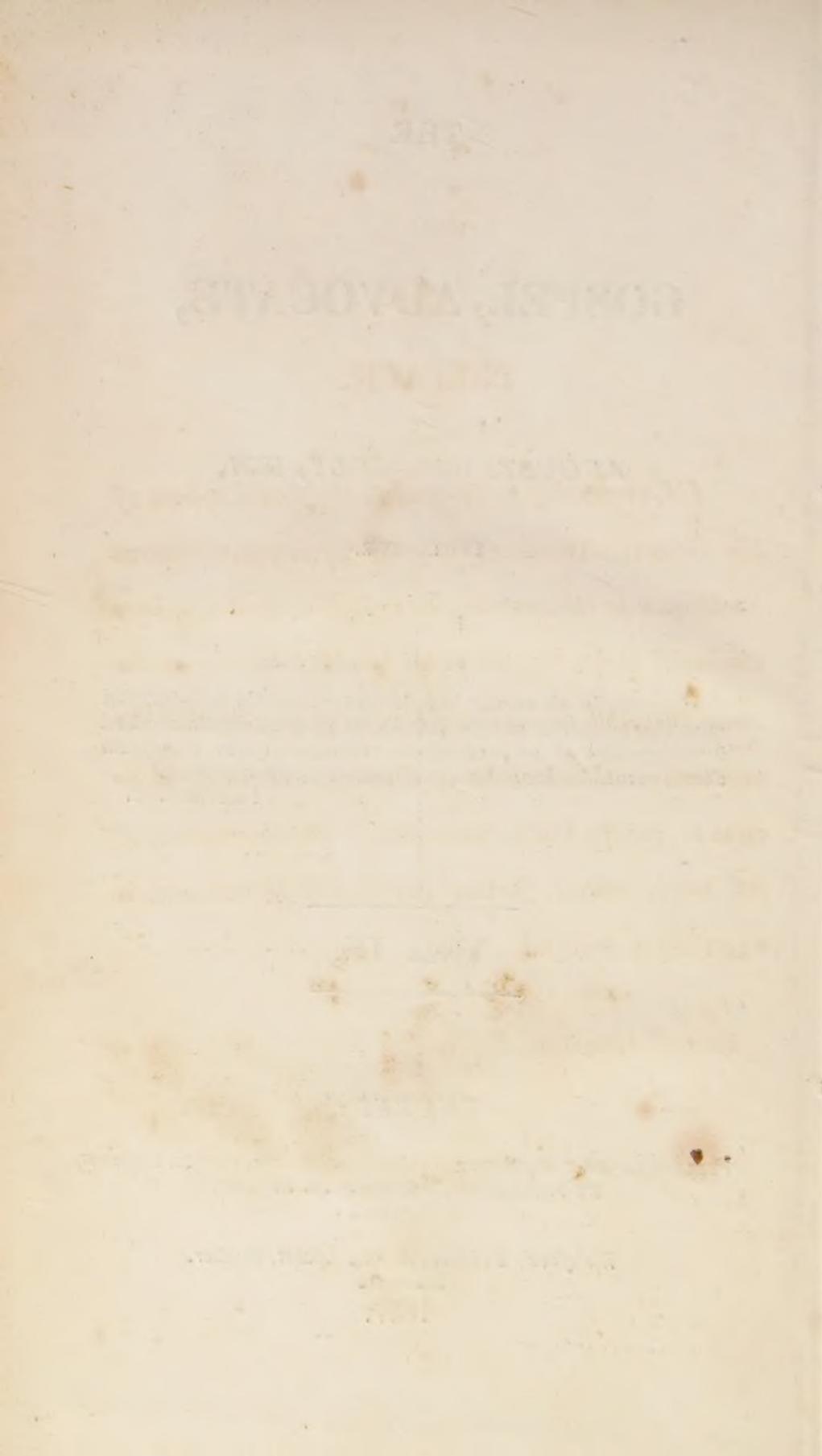
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## PREFACE.

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*IN presenting to his readers the fourth volume of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, the Editor once more returns his thanks to the contributors and subscribers who have continued their support to his humble labours;—at the same time, he is unwilling to conceal the fact that the assistance with which he is favoured is scarcely sufficient to justify him in proceeding. The continuance of the work, unless further aid should be received, is exceedingly doubtful.*

*Exeter, June 28th, 1837.*

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# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. XXXVII.

AUGUST, 1836.

VOL. III. IV

## ON THE SENTIMENT OF FAITH, AS REQUIRED BY CHRIST.

THE simple memoirs of Christ, contained in the four "Gospels," shew us how frequently and earnestly he taught the necessity of *faith*. He seems in general, if not invariably, to have required this, as an essential qualification, in all who were to receive the benefits of his miraculous power. He rebuked his disciples, on several occasions, for their want of faith, and highly commended certain persons who, in their intercourse with him, displayed this quality in a great and extraordinary degree. He manifestly regarded this as the principal foundation of the little piety and goodness which he met with amongst men; whilst he considered the increase and perfection of it absolutely necessary to that superior purity, elevation, and sanctity of character, which should belong to the members of his own spiritual kingdom. Many striking passages in the discourses of Jesus Christ might be referred to, in support of these assertions, if the truth of them were not too well known to need confirmation.

Now there are those who most unreasonably stumble at this conduct of our Saviour; and there are others who so misrepresent his ways in this respect, as to make them present a just and real cause of offence to thinking minds. It has been often objected, especially by unbelievers, that by thus insisting on the necessity of faith, by thus making the absence or existence of faith the ground of blame or praise, in regard to the moral characters of men, Jesus displayed narrowness of mind and ignorance of human nature. They affirm that *faith* (which they interpret as synonymous with *belief*,) being an involuntary act or state of the mind, cannot be the proper subject of either censure or commendation. They allege that all who perceived sufficient evidence to convince them of our Saviour's divine pretensions, or of the truth of any doctrine which he deliv-

ered, would of necessity have faith to the extent of their convictions ; and that all who were not so convinced could *not* have faith, whatever outward professions they might be induced to make. On such grounds as these, it is insinuated that the teaching and demeanour of Christ, in reference to this subject, affords an instance of the same fundamental and fatal error, and of the same unrighteous practice founded upon the error, as that which has been displayed by religious dominators in all ages ;—though, in his case, the error may have been accompanied with many kind and gracious dispositions. This prejudice of unbelievers has been fostered, to a degree which the language of Christ alone might never have produced, by the vain and presumptuous conduct of many of his followers. *They* have assumed, that faith, in the sense of belief in the truth of certain doctrines, was inculcated by Christ as essential to salvation ; and then assuming further, that the creed which they have adopted perfectly accords with this required faith, they have arrogated to themselves the authority of the great head of the Christian Church, for condemning to everlasting perdition all who reject or call in question their creed. In this way has the mild and merciful dispensation of the gospel been converted into a source of hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

There are sundry false premises, from which this most unhappy misconception of the religion of Christ is drawn. There is one erroneous assumption in particular, to which we desire to call the reader's attention in this paper. We conceive that both parties, the sceptic and the imposer of a creed, who unite in bringing this reproach upon Christianity, very seriously misapprehend the *nature* of the faith to which Jesus attached so much importance. We maintain that this faith was not belief in certain doctrines, regarded as propositions to be assented to and received by the understandings of men ;—which belief, indeed, being involuntary, and depending on the perceived force of evidence, is not directly a proper object either of praise or blame. But the faith so urgently required and so highly commended by Christ, is rather a suitable feeling of trust and confidence in moral truths which are already profess-  
edly believed. It is not a determinatiou or submission of

the intellect, but a sentiment of the heart, a prevailing state of the affections, resulting, in a great measure, from belief in certain moral and religious truths, but by no means to be confounded with simple belief. This distinction we hold to be as plain, as it is practically momentous. For example,—faith in God, as Christ made it, or would have made it, the object of his moral commendation, is not the simple contrary of Atheism, not the simple belief that there exists a God, but a proper degree of homage towards God, on the part of those who are supposed already to admit the divine existence. Faith in the providence of God, or in any especial promises of God, is not the simple belief that such a government is exercised by the Supreme Being over all his works, or that such particular assurances have been given to men, (which, if truths at all, are, *as such*, to be calmly recognised by the understanding on the grounds of their proper evidence,) but this faith is a suitable degree of practical, constant, earnest *reliance* on the providence and promises of God, such as ought, in moral consistency, to be cherished by all who acknowledge the truths on which it is founded. Even faith in Christ, in the sense in which he claimed it as morally due to him from his disciples, is not the mere general belief that he was sent from God,—for the truth of which he uniformly appealed to the proof of his miracles,—but it is a just degree of confidence and obedience, to be rendered to him by all those who, like Peter, confess themselves persuaded that he is indeed “the Christ, the Son of God.” Once more, therefore, we assert, that the faith which Christ inculcated as essential to the enjoyment of the great spiritual blessings of his kingdom, which he represented as the subject of God’s approbation, for the want of which he condemned and rebuked men,—this faith is not a simple conviction of the judgment, but a moral sentiment, properly resulting from convictions which are presumed to be entertained. There is, to our minds, no difficulty in supporting this conclusion by a fair examination of all the instances in which our Lord teaches the *merit* of faith. The only difficulties which do beset the question arise chiefly from passages taken, not from the discourses of Christ, but from the controversial writings of his apostles, and which, in fact, relate to a somewhat different subject,

(the covenanted privileges of believing Gentiles,) too extensive and complicated to be discussed in this place. But we shall content ourselves with referring to a few leading specimens of our Saviour's teaching, by which we think the correctness of our position is fully evinced. The serious inquirer will find the subject worthy of a more careful investigation.

We may first appeal to the instances where Christ gently reproaches his followers in the exclamation, "O ye of little faith!" In the sermon on the mount he makes use of this rebuke, in allusion to men's exorbitant anxiety for earthly necessaries and comforts, therein betraying, as he represents it, their lack of confidence in the bountiful care and goodness of God, whose watchful providence is over all nature. The words of Christ have particular force if we suppose, as is probable, that they were intended to prepare the minds of his chosen disciples for the time when they should be sent forth, destitute of any share of temporal provisions, to serve God in the publication of the gospel. He again employs the same language, in allusion to their want of reliance on his power and willingness to protect them from danger, even by the exercise of miracles if that were necessary, whilst they were engaged in attendance upon his ministry;—as when they were fearful of perishing in the tempest on the lake, when they were troubled because they had brought no bread, though they had lately witnessed the ability of Jesus to supply the wants of thousands by a miracle, and on several other occasions. There can be no doubt that this language of Christ does imply the highest merit in faith. But what is the nature of this faith? Not belief in any truths or facts, with which the understanding alone is concerned; for there cannot be the slightest reason to suppose that all the truths or facts connected with these instances of unfaithfulness were not firmly believed by all the disciples. No Jew could entertain a doubt of the universal and constant providence of God. It was even an especial principle of that religion, that God would reward with temporal safety and abundance all his obedient servants. As little could any of the personal followers of Jesus entertain a doubt of his miraculous power to relieve men from want and danger:—they had witnessed the display of this power in their Mas-

ter, on numerous occasions. But their weakness, for which they were rebuked by Jesus, consisted entirely in the failure of a just degree of confidence, such as would have been morally consistent with their belief, towards God and towards Christ. This was not an error of the judgment, but an infirmity of the heart. There was no further need of evidence; for all the general facts or truths required in the case were fully believed, or rather known, already. But there was much need of a closer discipline of the soul in its moral and pious sentiments, that all mere earthly fears and frailties might be brought into rightful subjection to religious principles actually entertained. It was plainly this moral defect and inconsistency, alone, which Jesus condemned in his followers. It was this which he exhorted and encouraged them to overcome, by the frequent and timely rebuke,—“O ye of little faith!”

We may appeal likewise to the instances of an opposite kind, in which Jesus bestows the highest praise on certain persons because of their superiority of faith. A heathen centurion, having a favourite servant sick of the palsy, sends to Jesus, in the most humble and respectful manner, entreating him to heal his servant, manifesting the utmost confidence in his power and disposition to work so benevolent a miracle. Jesus commends the centurion, by exclaiming, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” A woman who had been grievously diseased for twelve years, approached Christ in a way that shewed the strength of her reliance on the divine energies to do good with which he was endowed. Jesus said, “Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole;”—thereby, undoubtedly, commanding her faith. But what, in these and similar instances, is the nature of the faith which is pronounced by Christ to be meritorious? Evidently not mere belief, in the sense in which belief depends on proof, and is to be decided by the judgment. The whole history of Jesus shews, that the belief in his power to work miracles was entertained by all the people, even by his most violent and malicious enemies. That which the people at large did *not* possess, that for which the centurion and the diseased woman were commended, was a proper sentiment of reverential regard towards Christ, a feeling of humble confidence in his power.

and kindness; such as the most sceptical person will allow to have been morally due to one who had displayed so many striking proofs of his mission from God.

The same method of investigation will lead to the same conclusion, in respect to all other ways in which Christ expressed his approbation of *faith*, as a quality which evinced any virtue in the persons by whom it was manifested. It will be found that the object of his praise or blame, in every such case, was not a simple judgment of the understanding, not a simple act of belief or unbelief, but a moral state of the heart, either corresponding or inconsistent with convictions which may fairly be presumed to have been entertained by the parties. Any objections to this opinion, which may be drawn from certain passages of Scripture, appear to us exceedingly feeble, compared with the ample confirmation of its truth afforded by the whole teaching, life, and character of Christ. Yet there have been men, amongst the boldest adversaries of revelation, who have not scrupled to jeer at the conduct of Jesus in this respect, as if it were the conduct of a religious imposter, demanding implicit belief in all the dogmas which he might choose to utter. We are persuaded that this is a gross misconception of the character of Christ and of the gospel. The profoundest wisdom, mixed with a spirit of the utmost justice and liberality, pervades all the words and actions of our Lord in reference to this subject. He never extolled the merit of belief, regarded simply as an act or state of the judgment. He never pronounced unavoidable ignorance, or doubt, or error, to be criminal. This mistake concerning him, as well as many others, has arisen from the perverse delusion, common alike to friends and enemies, that Christ came into the world to establish a *notional* religion, consisting chiefly of opinions relating to the most mysterious properties of the divine nature, or the most secret purposes of the divine government. The true genius of the Christian religion is of a very contrary kind. The doctrines of Jesus, the subjects of knowledge or of belief which he professed to teach, were very few and simple; and such as he himself inculcated, in a great measure, on the evidence of reason, nature, and the former dispensation by Moses. He assumed indeed, we think justly, to be favoured with the enlightening spirit of

God, and was thereby enabled to give the sanction of divine wisdom to all the general truths which he taught. This inspiration, however, was not displayed in the promulgation of new and peculiar doctrines : it was displayed chiefly in the confirmation of such plain, sublime, and comprehensive truths, as had already been suggested to the minds of the worshipers of the only living God. The purpose of Christ's mission was to extend, to increase, to strengthen, the moral and spiritual influences of these solemn truths. The faith, therefore, on which he set so great a value, and which he uniformly inculcated as the vital principle of all goodness, was an earnest, practical confidence in the moral government and revealed promises of God, and in himself as the sanctified messenger of God to sinful men. These dispositions it was the labour of his life, and the end of all his miraculous gifts, to cherish in the souls of his followers. This faith he highly commended on all occasions ; but in so doing he appears to have presumed on the belief, as already existing in the minds of his hearers, that he was the Christ of God, and that God is the almighty, holy, and gracious Father, whom he revealed to men as the Author and Giver of all good. In recurring to this pure religious *sentiment*, as the ground of rest for our spirits from the speculative and uncertain *opinions* which the world has long mistaken for Christian faith, we experience a relief like that which anxious and wearied mariners must feel when, after being tossed for months on the waves of a tempestuous sea, they at length ride in safety within some calm and spacious harbour. Here the hearts of the penitent and the afflicted may repose themselves in heavenly peace. Strong and abundant faith of this kind is meritorious, in all who believe in God and believe also in Christ, because it is the right moral fruit of their professed convictions. The utter want of this kind of faith, is the greatest poverty of the human soul, the cause of weakness in virtue and of despair in time of trouble.

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## PRESENT STATE AND INCREASE OF MAHOMETANISM.

THE Christian world is still very much in need of a truly impartial and comprehensive history of the origin, character, and progress of Mahometanism. The most conflicting views of this religion, both as to its external condition and its moral influence, have long prevailed;—which, indeed, is the natural consequence of our general ignorance and prejudice on the subject. We know that the nations of Christendom, before and since the celebrated Crusades, have been accustomed to regard all the followers of the Arabian prophet with great abhorrence, as perfect infidels and wretched barbarians. On the contrary, we have had writers, especially in recent times, who, professing to derive their knowledge from personal observation, have given the most favourable accounts of the sentiments and manners of this people. We are assured that their faith is simple and rational, (including an acknowledgment of the divine mission of Christ,) and that their lives are far superior to those of the surrounding Christian communities. Ordinary inquirers are scarcely yet possessed of sufficient information, to decide with confidence on the truth of these statements. The truth may, probably, lie between the extremes. We confess, however, that we incline strongly to the opinion, that a thoroughly unprejudiced investigation of the subject would lead to a much more honorable estimate of the character of Mahometanism, than has been hitherto commonly entertained. There was much righteous provocation for some such movement as Mahomet effected, in the corrupt state of the Christian Church in the East at the time of his enterprise. With respect to the wars that have been waged in the spread of this religion, they are of course to be utterly condemned; but perhaps they are not worse than the enormities which have been perpetrated in support of the Papal form of Christianity, and they may possibly have as little to do with the pure, original system, in whose name they were carried on. The faith of the Mahometans appears to be a simple monotheism, embracing very little *dogma* of any kind; and their morals are said to be, in many respects, simple, temperate, and generous, although,

as we still believe, very inferior in other respects to those of the best portions of Christendom.

This subject is attended with much interest to the mind of every sincere friend of religion and humanity;—particularly on account of the extensive conversions from nominal Christianity to Mahometanism, which have long been going on in the East, and are reported as still proceeding. Who can foresee what designs of Providence may be ultimately effected in this, to us, mysterious manner?

In a recent number of the “British and Foreign Quarterly Review,” there is an article, evidently written by one who has great personal acquaintance with this subject, from which we make the following extracts:—

“ Nobody of the commonest information, is ignorant of the fact that Mahometanism reckons the Old and New Testament as inspired writings, and as *their* law; no one is ignorant that, though Mahomet is the last and greatest of the prophets, Christ to them is “the spirit of God,” and that the Koran, in all its excellent parts, is a transcript of the Testament, the remainder being wild and inoperative fancies: *but how few reflect on the different character which this state of mind gives to the Mahometan’s regard for Christianity, and the Christian’s regard for Mahometanism!* The Mahometan (strange as it may seem to the religious animosity of Christendom, which reflects itself, to its own eyes, in the dispositions of the East,) though he may not inquire particularly into the dogmas of our various churches, denies not the prophetic character of Jesus; and the expressions of contempt which many have misapplied to Christianity, are called forth by the symbols and externals of those sects which, to him, are the only personification of Christianity. A Protestant feels and expresses more loudly the same, without being set down as an infidel. Islamism does despise the external practices, and the church government, and even some of the dogmas of the sect to which M. De Lamartine belongs; it rejects an organised and bachelor priesthood—saints’ worship—auricular confession—the adoration of the Virgin—and revolts at the idea of transubstantiation. But from the pride and rites of the Romish Church where can it turn to form to itself a correct estimate of Christianity? solely to its Eastern rival; where all its faults are displayed without the veil or palliation of its riches, dignity, and instruction.

When, however, Mahometans have had opportunities of observing the forms of Protestant worship, and have entered a Christian Church—where no crucifixes—no images—no exhibitions of religious witchcraft or priestly fraud—no revolting display of a malefactor's tortures as a personification of the deity—they exclaim, and naturally too, ‘*This is not Christianity, this is our own worship !*’”

“ One consideration which we now indicate, but which it would require a volume to develope, is necessary to the comparison of the two systems, once struggling in arms, now peaceably co-existing in the East—and that consideration is, that Mahomet conceived his religious system, after all the evils resulting from the political character of the Eastern Church had developed themselves—when a priesthood with a code, organization, and a treasury, had introduced a strong line of demarcation, or rather a principle of opposition, into the heart of the church, placing on one hand the professors of the faith, on the other the servants of the altar.

“ We come to latter times: and here, in our own century, an equally strange ignorance is to be found in Europe of things as they are. M. De Lamartine has ventured to inform his *co-religionists* that proselytism to Christianity does not take place; nay, that it is impossible. This is much, but not all. Proselytism is now rapidly going on from Christianity to Islamism. We state, from our own observation, the fact of proselytism among Greeks, Bulgarians, and Georgians; we have conversed with individuals of all these races, who have become Mussulmans. The extent to which this goes it may be impossible to state with any degree of accuracy, but it is considerable.

“ This is not of to-day. A century ago there were no Albanian Mahometans, there are now above a million; the Slavonic populations were all Christians, they now reckon two millions of Mahometans. The Greeks of Europe have been subject to less change, yet considerable numbers, though no large bodies, that we are aware of, have embraced Islamism. Not so the Asiatic Greeks; the district of Off, which contains a large portion of the remnants of the Greek empire of Trapezuntium, have all become Mussulmans. They speak Greek still (while, strange to say, the *Haichrum*, or Armenian Greeks, the Greeks of the Greek Church of Asia Minor, *speak Turkish*;) and

preserving the scholastic temperament of their race, have all of them applied themselves to the study of the Mussulman law, and are to be found all over the empire as doctors, judges, and scribes. In each village they tell you the year when it pleased God to enlighten them, and deliver them from idolatry and licentious habits. The Curds and many Armenians passed in a large mass from Christianity to Islamism, on the refusal of the Patriarchs of the Armenian and Greek Churches to permit them to use milk and curds during the long fasts, and these pastoral people have often no other means of subsistence. Even the Jews have been converted to Islamism. A body of them, a hundred and fifty years ago, at Salonica, passed from the faith of Abraham ; but they still remain a distinct though wealthy and respected class, under the title of Dunme. The Georgians in the Turkish territory have, within fifty years, begun to abandon Christianity ; their conversion is now almost complete. We extract from a recent traveller in that country, some cursory observations on the subject.

“ ‘ Russia introduced disorders into this province, and fomented them ; the Dere Bey system sprang up, and this, with the discredit attached to Christianity by the neighbouring administration of Russia, has led to the apostacy of the Lazes. Russia, in separating them administratively from the Porte, has brought about their religious union to the Sultan—she has, moreover, raised their character ; for it must be observed, that the difference here is not between the Bible and the Koran, between Christianity and Islamism, but between the superstition and idolatry of the Greek church and the simplicity of the Mussulman practice—between two systems of which *the apparent differences are religious, but of which the material differences are political and social.*

“ ‘ The Georgians are proverbial for drunkenness and debauchery ; they are not brave, they are superstitious. Those who have become Mussulmen seem to have entirely abjured the characteristics of their race ; they have become sober, chaste, and hospitable ; these are habits of their new faith. Their character has acquired dignity by belonging to the honored class. *In confirmation of this change of spirit, the establishment of their schools in each village dates from the epoch of its conversion.”’*

## ON LITURGIES.

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THE publication of a second edition of the Liturgical Services which nearly two years ago were introduced into use at George's Meeting in Exeter,\* and which have just now, we understand, been adopted by the neighbouring congregations at Topsham and Lympstone, makes us think it expedient to offer on this occasion some remarks on the utility of Liturgical forms in general, as well as on the merits of the present compilation in particular.

Most of our readers must be aware that from the days of Calvin downwards, much controversy has existed, not only with respect to the expediency of the use of set forms of prayer in Christian Churches, but even with respect to their lawfulness. They have been decried as an indolent substitute for personal exertion, a mere mechanical contrivance for the discharge of religious duty, a quenching of the spirit, and in short a *caput mortuum* of devotion from which all its essence has already fled.

In the present day, although there are many to whom the use of Liturgies still appears objectionable, there are probably but few who entertain any idea of their being sinful or unlawful. In case, however, any of those few should chance to be among our readers, we will briefly remind them that it is not doubted that this mode of service was that adopted in the ancient Jewish Church, and according to which our Lord himself, in the Synagogues, joined in the worship of the Eternal Father. The apostles continued in the same practice, every where attending the Jewish synagogues, nor ever expressing, as far as we know, the slightest disapprobation of the form of the service. In the Christian societies, it is probable that in their earliest state, while supernatural gifts were abounding and many were ready to speak as the spirit gave them utterance, when the allotted time of public worship was in good part occupied with the singular and solemn entertainment of prophecy, and tongues, and their interpretation, the use of liturgies being plainly not required, was but sparingly, if at all, resorted to. But that in no long time after the apostolic age, and indeed more or less even

\* Forms of Prayer for Public Worship : Selected, with Alterations, from the Services of the Church of England, and various other Sources. Second Edition. Exeter: 1s. 6d. bound in cloth.

during the life of the apostles, they began to grow into use, is evidenced by the testimony of antiquity, and by the sundry ancient Liturgies which still remain in our hands. These, though without due authority, bearing the names of James, John, Peter, Matthew, &c., show that the use of such forms was so early and immemorial in the church, that tradition could, without violence, assign them to the apostles as their authors.

Moreover, we may ask what essential or material difference there is between the use of set forms in prayer, and the use of equally set forms in Psalms and Hymns. The devotional intent and spirit of these two parts of religious worship is very nearly akin: our prayers are in great measure thanksgivings, and our hymns supplication. And if any one should allege that the use of precomposed *hymns* must be granted for the sake of the music, let him consider that in that case no more is required to meet his objection to precomposed *prayers*, than to adopt the practice of chanting them. Perhaps he would not think this an improvement: but if prayers read are better than prayers chanted, it cannot be music that makes a form less objectionable.

But probably nine out of ten of those among Protestant Dissenters who object to Liturgies in the present day, would be disposed to waive the question of lawfulness or propriety, and urge only that of utility or expediency. Contrasting the use of set forms with the practice of free prayer, they are of opinion that the former has few or no advantages, and that the latter is decidedly more edifying and useful.

As it appears by the preface, that the liturgical services in the little volume now under review are expressly adapted to be used in concurrence with a liberal allowance of free prayer, and by no means intended to supersede it, we are not at present called on, nor are we inclined, to discuss the question of the relative merits of these two methods of devotion, when one of them is used singly and exclusively. Nor does there appear to be in fact the slightest necessity of raising this question in practice, since nothing would appear more easy and agreeable than to allow in the arrangement of our public services a space for each of them. In that way, provision is made for the inevitable differences of tastes and habits, and the

congregation will alternately have the benefit of whatever peculiar advantages may belong to either method. It will therefore be sufficient for our present argument, if we can show that some considerable advantages may be derived from a concurrent use of liturgies, which would be lost if free prayer were used exclusively. Some brief suggestions bearing on this point shall now be offered.

And here we may first notice the *superior intrinsic excellence*, which set forms may reasonably be expected to possess above the average of extemporaneous effusions and occasional compositions. It has become an acknowledged point, that simple as devotional composition may seem, it is in fact one of the most difficult kinds that can be attempted. When man addresses his God, a style becomes fitting which is altogether peculiar to such an occasion. Many words, indeed, cannot be necessary in speaking to one who already knows not only our wants, but our thoughts and wishes: but if those words be such as to harmonize with the feelings of an enlightened and pious spirit in the attitude of prayer, they will combine simplicity and weight, dignity and pathos, in no ordinary degree. To produce this combination requires not only care and skill, but such a touch of true devotional genius, and religious elevation of thought, as is not every day to be met with, even among good and able men. It is the lapse of time, which in this department as in others, has furnished mankind with accumulated treasures: and it is after ages of pious labor, that the church has gathered those choice fruits of devotion, which it now has in store. It seems unwise to cast these wholly aside, and to use exclusively the commoner and cruder produce of the passing day.

To many persons liturgical forms have the further advantage of *readier appropriability*. Having some previous acquaintance with the petitions to be offered, they find it easier, as the service passes on, to throw their minds into them, and to make them their own. It is like a well ordered procession, where details being previously arranged, all parties are ready to fall at once into their parts and places, as it moves forwards. We do not, however, mean to deny, that in this particular different minds are very differently affected. To some, whatever is previously known is dull and unexciting, while the sympathies of others are with difficulty roused by what is new.

It is enough for our purpose to contend, that very many do find in set forms, when not over often repeated, the advantage we have above described. We have thought them of especial use in aiding the attention of the young.

Another advantage of Liturgies we may call their *retainability*. Prayers made for the day, once delivered, and heard no more, are soon effaced from memory, and all their thoughts and phrases lost, or nearly lost, to the mind. The purposes of present devotion they may well have served; but many, we think, will agree with us in opinion, that the habitual use of an excellent Liturgy is calculated to do no mean service, by supplying the mind with a stock of the best devotional sentiments and language, such as will tend to elevate the style of its own effusions, as well as to supply the deficiencies of less favoured hours. Then, when the fountains of divine communion seem dry and exhausted, and the soul, cold and barren, refuses, though solicited, to yield the grateful tributes of piety, the value of these treasures of memory will be felt. While we use them, it is likely the secret springs of sympathy will be touched, and spontaneous emotions will begin to flow; but if not, we shall be furnished with the best substitute, that, for a season, can supply their place.

Again, we think that Liturgies have a decided advantage in point of *authority*. Having been deliberately approved and adopted by the congregation, they appear to us, when considered as addressed to God, to carry with them more weight and propriety, to be in a stricter sense the worship of the congregation, than any prayers occasionally uttered by the minister, however excellent in themselves such prayers may be. We can therefore join in a liturgical service with a fuller sense and impression that the voice in which we join is the voice of the people,—of the church: and this is a moving and animating thought. Nor is this same consideration of *authority* without weight in respect of them who are without; and especially in the case of Christian societies, which like those of Unitarians, are much spoken against and misrepresented. For such, it is of important advantage, to be able to place in the hands of the enquirer or gainsayer, the printed forms of devotion which they approve and use, and which, there is little doubt, will be a practical confutation of much that is said against them.

May we not further suggest, that the use of liturgies has an advantage as a *security*: we mean as a security to the congregation in the case of failure on the part of the minister to discharge his functions properly? Such cases do and must occur from causes which it were superfluous to enumerate here; and it is obvious, that where an excellent Liturgy is used, a society will suffer less from this contingency than another whose devotional exercises are wholly supplied by the minister. What would have been, ere this, the situation of many churches in the Establishment, had they not enjoyed this security?

The last particular that shall be mentioned is that of *uniformity*. This, when *not compulsory*, but proceeding from rational and voluntary causes, is a pleasing idea, and an advantageous reality. The use of Liturgies evidently tends to create a much greater measure of uniformity among congenial societies, than the system which excludes them. Yea, it is so, even in the same society, at different periods of its existence. Where Liturgies are used, the descendants to the third and fourth generation, may often reflect with pleasure, when they are engaged in their devotions, that their pious ancestors uttered the same sentiments in the same language a century before them.

From these remarks in favor of a modified, *not exclusive*, use of liturgical forms in general, let us turn to a brief notice of those contained in the little volume now before us. Perhaps we cannot better convey a knowledge of the plan of the work, than by an extract from the short but comprehensive preface.

"The present set of services have been purposely made both shorter, and, it is believed, more various than any others that have been hitherto composed: and it is expressly intended that the Minister's own prayer before sermon should still remain a *substantial part* of the service, to embrace such topics, general or occasional, as he may deem proper, and to be of such length as his own judgment may dictate, or the habits of the congregation require. In short the following Liturgies are altogether designed, not as a complete substitute for the exercise of free prayer on the part of the Minister, but only as preliminary and auxiliary to ~~such~~ prayer.

"It will be seen that ample use has been made of the beautiful and universally admired compositions contained

in the “*Book of Common Prayer.*” Beside the ordinary “Morning and Evening Prayer” of the Church of England, almost all the “Collects,” and a large portion of the “Communion Service,” have likewise been introduced into the present compilation. Some prayers have been taken from previous works of this kind, well known to Dissenters; and others, which it is hoped will prove especially acceptable, have been selected from the writings of that unrivalled master of devotional and practical divinity, Bishop Jeremy Taylor.”

It may be proper to inform such of our readers as have not seen the work itself, that these Liturgies comprise, beside forms for Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, *four morning and as many evening services*, with a view to providing a distinct one for every Sunday in the month. Though there is very little repetition, by far the greater part of the matter of these services is drawn from the Common Prayer Book, and observing how largely and judiciously the compilers have availed themselves of this source, we think we may say to Churchmen,

“They have a better use of yours than you.”

The services are so arranged as to present great variety. In some the broken and responsive, in others the more continuous form of prayer, prevails; but in all, care has been taken to prevent monotony, by occasional responses from the people.

The following profession of the preface appears to us completely justified throughout the work. “The compilers earnestly trust, that these Prayers will not be found to contain any thing of a doctrinal nature, to which any Christian believer can seriously object: yet they have endeavoured to embrace all that is necessary to express the peculiar sentiments and spirit of Christian *devotion.*” This we think perfectly true; for throughout the book, we have not observed a single sentiment or expression, which we could suppose objectionable to Christians of any party. In letter and in spirit this work is truly *catholic*: and combining this great merit with a rich strain of thought and thoroughly practical and devotional character throughout, we trust it is destined to render some good service to the cause of true and Scriptural religion in these parts of our land.

## MINIATURES OF NATURE.

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### BANKS OF THE YEO.

DESCRIBE this spot ! How can I ? Walton should  
Be here to catch its spirit. The warm sun  
Drawing to evening ; distant hill and wood,  
Misted with that poetic Claude-like dun,  
Blue, gray, and golden, melting into one,  
While yet they keep their fine distinctions all :

Before us, lo, the glistening waters run  
Through the lone mead with lapse most musical,  
With many a bend, and many a would-be fall,

Now under screen of brake, now through the deep,  
But open, sandy channel, now in small,

Still, glassy pools, from which the bright fish leap ;  
Lambs bleating far ; and, from trees near, the birds  
Singing a song too happy for all words !

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### SHADOWS OF TREES.

Trees are fine Nature's dials. As their shadows  
Fall east or west, all, who with her reside,—  
The labourer toiling in the woods and meadows,  
The poet musing in his silent pride,  
The lover waiting for still evening-tide,  
The mower stretched upon the drooping hay,—

All judge, as on the trus' brown shadows glide,  
How wear the hours that number out the day.  
How beautiful to me they daily stray

O'er yon steep slope of living green—where now  
They fold and cool a whole small flock—one ray  
Ruddying a shaggy truant's back and brow !—  
“ There is no clock in the forest : ”\*—And let me  
Count summer hours out by the shadowing tree.

\* “ As You Like It.”

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THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

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The very ancient and interesting book of Genesis contains a history of the creation of the world and the origin of the human race. In a style of great simplicity, but very descriptive and beautiful, it represents the Great Creator in the act of forming the world out of a vast heap of chaotic matter, adorning it with various tribes of vegetables, peopling it with every creature that hath life, and crowning the whole by the creation of the first human pair. For the residence of these, His most distinguished creatures, He prepared a beautiful garden replete with every thing to please the eye and invite the taste, in the midst of which he caused to grow two trees remarkably distinguished from the rest of the leafy tribes—the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of these trees was not to be plucked. Whilst the innocent and happy pair had free liberty to eat of the fruit of every other tree of the garden, they were laid under a severe prohibition with respect to these—in the day they ate of them they were surely to die. By the learned this surprizing history is variously understood. Its great antiquity is beyond dispute. And no other account of the origin of things can be compared with it. It is by far the most rational of all. The great question at issue among the learned is, whether the work itself is to be received as a literal description of what really took place at the formation of the world, or an allegorized history in which facts are described not as they really occurred but by the free use of figurative language. I admit the strength of the arguments used by those who adopt the latter opinion. The attempt to interpret the history of the creation and the fall of man in a strictly literal sense, is met by such insuperable difficulties that I am led to regard the whole as a mixture of fact and allegory. I am, therefore, disposed to receive the account of the planting of the tree of life and that of the knowledge of good and evil, and the sin committed by our first parents in eating the fruit of the latter, rather as a figurative description of some act of disobedience, or an attempt to account for the introduction of moral evil into the world, than a narrative of real transactions. But there is no

sufficient reason for disbelieving Adam's breach of the divine command, although it may have been exemplified in a manner which the historian has thought proper to conceal under a figurative description. His weakness may have been as great as it is represented by the sacred writer, and followed by deserved punishment: the difficulty lies in receiving as fact the statement that trees, whose fruit gave immortality and the knowledge of good and evil to those who partook of it, actually grew in the garden of which Adam and his wife were the happy occupants.

But the question is, perhaps, more curious than useful. In whatever sense the sacred writing is received, the conclusion, with respect to the second of the trees is nearly the same; Adam, and therefore his descendants, possessed the knowledge of good and evil: this is the fact, and with this in view, we may spare ourselves the pursuit of intricate speculations.

"To know good and evil," is a phrase of frequent recurrence in Scripture, and by referring to some of the passages in which it appears we shall be enabled to form a correct opinion of the nature of the power which the tree of Eden is said to have communicated. Deut. i, 39, the infant children of the Israelites are described as having no knowledge of good and evil. 2 Sam. xix, 35. Barzillai on refusing to accompany David to Jerusalem on account of his great age and infirmities' asks, "Can I discern between good and evil?" The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, comparing the doctrines of Christianity to strong meat, thus describes the persons for whom it is proper—"Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The phrase, therefore, denotes the possession of reason, understanding and conscience. In the first instance quoted, the infants of the Israelitish wanderers were too young to exert these faculties; in the second, the aged Barzillai felt that these faculties were failing him; and in the third, the faculties are justly shewn to be the strongest in those who are in the vigour of life.

According to the use of this phrase therefore, we must understand that men are gifted with the power of dis-

cerning between moral good and evil. If the introduction to the book of Genesis is to be received in a literal sense, this power was gained for themselves and their posterity by Adam and Eve's eating the fruit of the forbidden tree; if in an allegorical sense, it still denotes the universal possession of the power or principle by mankind. It is inherent in their nature, and it exists in every variety of the species and under every form of society. There is no such thing as total indifference to the nature or the quality of an action. The performance of it is accompanied by some inward consciousness that it is either right or wrong. It is attended by a pleasurable sensation—that of self approbation; or by a sense of shame—by self-reproach. This is the case with him who performs it; and others if it be known to them form an opinion respecting it; these either mark it with a testimony of their approbation, or they bestow their censure upon it. Thus by common consent and agreement, and at the suggestion of the mysterious voice within, mankind esteem some things as right, virtuous, and therefore to be sought after and practised; and others as wrong, vicious, and therefore to be despised and shunned. And so strong is this consent of opinion, that he whose practices are virtuous feels confident in possessing the good opinion of those who know him, whilst the man whose practices are vicious is anxious to screen himself from the notice of the world because he is certain that he will be universally reprobated.

To this statement some objector would perhaps oppose the condition of savage nations, and point with anticipated triumph to customs and conduct on which the civilized world looks with abhorrence. The objection, if valid, would reduce man, in an uncivilized state at least, to the level of the brute creation. But it is not valid. The moral sense exists among savages. It is not fine in its discriminations, nor powerful in its dictates, perhaps, but it undoubtedly exists. Are there no traces of right feeling among savages? Is there nothing which Christian Europe, with all her moral and religious advantages, can admire? Is there no sincere attachment, no fidelity, no friendship, no patriotism, no magnanimity, no benevolence, no religion? These virtues often flourish

where the arts of life are but few and the condition is indeed savage, and they are sometimes carried to a height which the best educated in the school of Christ can only equal. For the existence of practices which are almost universally and deservedly reprobated, a reason may be found, without denying even to savages the possession of that which constitutes the grand distinction between man and all the inferior inhabitants of the earth. Their passions have carried them forward with headlong impetuosity, and the suggestions of the moral sense have been unheard, or exerted themselves in vain against the tyrannical rule of custom and habit.

*To be continued.*

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### HAPPINESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

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There's nothing in the prosperous state  
Of wicked men to tempt thy care;  
For mockery hovers round the great  
As canker buds in roses are.

As fugitive as ripened grass  
When comes the harvest-season round,  
Like to an autumn cloud they pass,  
And sought by all, by none are found.

But let them rise and let them fall—  
Move on, thou righteous! tranquilly  
For all is led by God,—and all  
Is well, and must be well with thee.

Earth in its hidden bosom shrouds  
The germs which future springs will bear;  
Heaven hath its transitory clouds  
Which melt away in azure clear.

So mortal man hath want and woe  
And pain and death—but all shall be  
Absorbed in that great overflow  
Which rolls to immortality.

*“Syria, the Holy Land, Asia Minor, &c. illustrated in a Series of Views drawn from Nature by W. H. Bartlett, W. Purser, &c., with descriptions of the Plates by John Carne, Esq.* London : Fisher, Son, and Co.

Amongst the many improvements in the Arts to which the last few years have given birth, not the least important in their influence on the tastes and manners of society are those which have been effected in the Fine Arts, by the invention of steel engraving and lithography. The facilities which these, and especially the former, afford for the multiplication of copies, have led to the publication, at a very moderate price, of a variety of interesting works, of which each successive one seems to surpass its predecessors in the style and beauty of its execution.

By means of these, thousands, whose occupations necessarily confine them within short limits of their own homes, have placed before their mind's eye, in a far clearer light than any verbal description could do, the picturesque and enchanting scenery of our own country, or the sublimer features of foreign land ; while to others, have been furnished the means of estimating, in no very imperfect manner, the noble compositions of the greatest masters of painting, of whom ten years ago they had perhaps only heard by name.

The value then of such publications would not be trifling, did they serve only to gratify a reasonable desire to obtain a somewhat clearer conception of scenes on which the traveller and the poet have dwelt with rapture, or to know something more than the names, of those whose productions have been the delight and wonder of succeeding ages. But in truth they have a higher tendency, for inasmuch as they will encourage a relish for pleasures of a more intellectual kind, and will assist in forming that taste for what is noble and grand in nature, or in art, which an intimacy with the fine arts can scarcely fail to beget, they will at the same time elevate the sentiments and affections above the low and sensual gratifications with which the uncultivated mind is too apt to be content.

These remarks have been called forth by the appearance of a new publication of the class alluded to, the

title of which stands at the head of this notice, and which promises in no degree to fall short of the best of those which have preceeded it in beauty of execution, whilst it greatly excels most in the interest of its subject. To insure fidelity in the representations, the publishers engaged artists to travel for the express purpose of making drawings for the work, and we may therefore hope that this important point has not been sacrificed, as it too often is, either from want of leisure to complete them on the spot, or from a desire to embellish nature. They have also obtained the assistance of Mr. Carne, the talented author of "Letters from the East," to furnish the descriptive part, and no one perhaps is better fitted to do full justice to the subject.

The work is not designed exclusively to illustrate the sacred history, which to most will be no ground of objection, for independently of the high interest those countries possess from classical associations, they promise to acquire a fresh importance as the great thoroughfare along which the stream of commerce between the eastern and western world will ere long flow. Doubtless, however, its chief interest will be derived from the fidelity with which it portrays the present state of the places most remarkable in the sacred records, and this will, therefore, be made its main object. We have no reason to complain of any neglect of this object in the two numbers already published, for along with views of the Cydnus and of Balbic, valuable chiefly to the classical reader, and of others whose interest is of a more modern kind, we have here the village of Eden, whose delicious situation amidst the cedars of Lebanon has given rise to the tradition that in this spot our first parents dwelt;—and Tarsus, the birth-place of the Apostle of the Gentiles;—and Damascus, one of the most gloriously seated cities of the earth, the scene of the conversion and early labours of the same Apostle;—and Antioch once the queen of the east, where the honorable name of Christian was first bestowed on the followers of Christ, the cradle of the earliest missions for the conversion of the Gentiles; and where, during the middle ages, not less than three hundred and sixty convents, besides numerous splendid churches, testified to the outward prosperity of the Christian cause: but now dis-

playing only the melancholy remains of its former greatness, whilst the few remaining Christians assemble in a cave without the town to commemorate the death of their Lord.

In this kind of interest the work can scarcely fail to increase as it proceeds, and if completed as it has been begun will form a valuable acquisition to those who desire, with Carne or De la Martine for their guide, to wander in imagination amidst the fields of Palestine. In that land every hill and stream is connected with the memory of the prophets and the warriors who lived and died in the worship of the one true God; and the footsteps of the traveller are amongst the paths so often trodden by the Saviour of the world, and by those his faithful disciples who like their master lived, and laboured, and gave themselves to death for the salvation of mankind. Noble minded men and true heroes, they shrunk not in their holy warfare!

They fell devoted but undying;  
The very gale their names seems sighing;  
The waters murmur of their name;  
The woods are peopled with their fame;  
The silent Pillar, lone and grey,  
Claims kindred with their sacred clay;  
Their spirits wrap the dusky mountain;  
Their memory sparkles o'er the fountain;  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,  
Rolls mingling with their fame for ever.

*“Observations on Lord John Russell’s Bill for Registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, with the outlines of a Plan for Registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Great Britain and Ireland. By JAMES YATES, M.A. Fellow of the Linnean and Geological Societies, &c. &c. London:—R. Hunter, 72, St. Paul’s Church-yard. 1836.”*

MR. Yates has here directed his attention, with laudable industry and zeal, to a subject which is confessedly of great practical importance. The necessity for some improved system of registration of births, marriages, and deaths, is so

generally acknowledged, that the question is now happily taken up in a more candid spirit than formerly, by all parties in the kingdom. Yet there appears much probability that the Bill now before Parliament will not pass into a law, as there is considerable opposition to it on the part of the clergy and others. Mr. Yates indeed thinks, not without good shew of reason, that the Bill has many and great defects, and that he is able to suggest a better method of registration. The leading feature of his plan is, that he would connect the business of registration, not with Parishes and Poor-Law Unions, (as provided in the Bill of Lord John Russell,) but with the Post Office. He argues very forcibly for the advantages of this proposal.

"The department of the public service, to which I have adverted, has for the proposed end the manifest advantage of including the British empire under one uniform system, and it communicates with every other part of the world. All its officers are appointed by the Government, and are, either directly or indirectly, under their supervision and control; and, although many of them may from age, sex, or incapacity, be ill qualified for the office of registrars, yet this defect may be entirely rectified in the course of time, because the whole matter will be in the hands of the Government, and the importance and emoluments of the office of Post-master will be so advanced by having that of Registrar annexed to it, that persons of high respectability and of talents and character proportionate to the duties to be discharged will be appointed without difficulty. Indeed the business of the Registrar will be on the plan, which I shall explain, so simple and regular, that any person, who is fit to have the management of a Post-office, will be also fit to manage the registration.

"Every one knows the Post-office: at least there are few so utterly devoid of all trace of civilization as never to send or receive letters, and not to be aware through what agency they are conveyed. When, therefore, it is understood throughout the empire, that a uniform system is in operation for registering births, deaths, and marriages, and that it is carried on through the instrumentality of the Post-office, every one will know without any further direction, and without the necessity of fixing notices to church-doors, &c. where he is to go, when he has any business of this description to transact.

"The Post-offices are distributed throughout the empire exactly as they are required for the convenience of the inhabitants. As the population changes, they may change; but in general they are fixed and permanent, and they constitute so many central points, each of which has been determined with a view to supply the wants of a number of families and individuals more or less thickly disseminated over the surrounding circle. If an attempt were made to divide Great Britain and Ireland into districts on a new plan for the sole and express purpose of registration, I do not think the division would

differ much from that, which has been in the course of time and in compliance with circumstances adopted in order to facilitate communication by the transmission of letters.

"On the other hand, no distribution seems worse adapted for purposes of utility than that into parishes.

"The parochial division of the country is so ill adapted to any civil purpose, that, notwithstanding all the attempts to accommodate it to practice by unions and subdivisions, both of the bills, which have admitted this principle, retain strong traces of its injurious influence."

Mr. Yates afterwards explains the details of the method which he recommends. Blank forms are to be printed by Government alone, and sold at a low price, which the parents, (or otherwise, as the case may be,) are to fill up in writing, and the Registrar of the district, being either the Post-master, or transacting his business at the Post Office, after satisfying himself of their accuracy, is to sign them. There are to be three copies of each Register, one kept by the parties interested, one preserved at the district Registry Office, and the other transmitted by post, (free,) to the general office in London, there to be arranged alphabetically, and bound in volumes, in a way to admit of easy and certain reference. The author has contrived, very ingeniously, to make one kind of register refer to another,—the register of the birth of a child to the register of the marriage of its parents, and that again to the register of the birth of the parents themselves—so as greatly to facilitate the settlement of questions of descent and relationship. The pamphlet is worthy the attention of all who take an interest in the general subject.

In an appendix Mr. Yates smartly handles some of the absurd objections of the clergy to any interference with their monopoly in this respect.

"The first objection is founded upon the fact, which I have above stated, that many persons baptize their children in the Church of England solely or principally for the sake of having them registered. As this is a manifest profanation of a Christian ordinance, and since to be required to officiate on such occasions must be distressing and disgusting to every sincere and pious mind, the fact admitted by Mr. Hale would appear to me to lead to an exactly opposite conclusion to that which he deduces from it. Instead of maintaining, that the advantage of having a child's name and birth inserted in the parochial registry of baptisms should continue to be held out as a lure to the thoughtless, the impious, and the profligate to bring their children to the font, and to perform there the dreadful mockery, which in such

circumstances the ceremony would become, I should argue that, in order that the rite of baptism may be observed as a purely religious rite, and that the godfathers and godmothers may engage in it with the sincerity of heart and with the solemn feelings and convictions appropriate to it, it is exceedingly to be desired that the registration of birth should be a purely civil affair, and that provision should be made for it independently of baptism. I conceive that the 70th Canon was framed in wisdom, which only directs ministers to keep a register of Christenings, weddings, and burials, requiring the Church to record its own acts, but not to intermix with them any secular objects.

"Mr. Hale calculates, that the passing of the two Bills, upon which he animadverts, will deprive the clergy of his church of fees to the amount of £50,000 a-year. Could Mr. Hale pursue the calculation a step further? Could he inform us what proportions of this vast sum, now received by the clergy, is the wages of iniquity? We have seen how frequently children are baptized in the Church of England merely for the sake of having them registered; and there can be no doubt, that the proportion is far greater of those who marry without any participation in the religious service. Indeed, the clergy themselves maintain with regard to some of those who go to the altar, that the law obliges them in so doing to violate their conscience and to become idolators. The necessary consequence of annexing a religious ceremonial according to the rites and doctrines of a particular church to a civil act is that the ceremonial becomes a mere formality, or rather a piece of forced hypocrisy; those who dissent from the Church are ignominiously dragged to its font or to its altar, and those who are sincerely attached to it are constrained to witness the desecration of its edifices and the profanation of its sacraments."

*"Thoughts on Physical Education, and the True Mode of Improving the Condition of Man; and on the Study of the Greek and Latin Languages. By GEORGE CALDWELL, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine and Clinical Practice in Transylvania University. With Notes by ROBERT COX, and a Recommendatory Preface by GEORGE COMBE. Edinburgh:— Adam and Charles Black, North Bridge Street, and Longman and Co., London. 1836.*

The author of this little volume, an American physician, is a most determined and zealous phrenologist, on which account many of his speculative notions are not likely to meet with the approbation of the generality of readers. And indeed we ourselves, albeit no scornful enemies of the broad principles of phrenology, cannot deny that Dr. Caldwell's philosophy sometimes appears to us none of

the clearest or most accurate. There are several opinions broached in the course of the work, about matter and spirit, and so forth, which have no necessary connexion either with the subject he has in hand, or with the phrenological system in general. Nevertheless, this book contains the exposition of many important truths, not commonly attended to, respecting the necessity of a more regular and systematic *physical* education for young people. The author well describes the folly of aiming extravagantly at the supposed improvement of the *minds* of children, to the neglect of all direct endeavours to strengthen and improve their *bodily* organization, on which both their intellectual and moral character, and their usefulness and happiness throughout life, will probably much depend. Many judicious practical hints are given for the guidance of parents and nurses, in the physical training of those committed to their care. The book would be more valuable if it had less of random speculation, and were composed in a more skilful manner; but it is still well worthy of an attentive perusal by all whom its subjects may concern.

The author thus delivers his general views :—

"The human body is a very complicated apparatus. It consists of many different organs, which are again made up of other organs, each performing its specific functions. But these organs, I repeat, instead of acting every one for itself alone, act also for each other individually and collectively, and are united in a system by function and sympathy. The condition of one organ, therefore, whether sound or unsound, influences and modifies that of many others. If it be a principal organ, it influences the whole machine. There are three great sets of organs, which, while they are intimately and indispensably connected with each other, control all the rest, and assimilate their condition in no small degree to their own. These are the chylopoetic (chyle-making or digestive) organs,—the blood-making and blood-circulating organs, consisting of the lungs and the heart,—and the brain, spinal cord, and nerves, which are the instruments of intellect and feeling, and are essential also to voluntary motion. To the heart must be added its appendages, the blood vessels. These three sets of organs have been said to control all the others; and this they do chiefly by mutually controlling themselves—by exercising, I mean, such a reciprocal influence as to be all at the same time somewhat assimilated in condition. They are as necessary to each other as they are to the whole. Is one of them materially deranged in its action? The two others suffer immediately, and all the rest of the system in its turn.

Is the brain diseased? Its healthy influence, which is indispensable to the well-being of the two other sets of associated organs, is withheld from them, and they also fail in their action, as well as in their sound and sustaining sympathies. The chyle and blood are deteriorated. This proves a source of further injury to the brain, which, unless it be supplied with well prepared blood, is neither itself in good condition, nor capable of contributing to the health and efficiency of the other parts of the body. It cannot prepare, from a scanty and bad material, the substance or agent of its own influence, whatever it may be, in sufficient quantity, and of sound qualities. The general mischief arising from a primary morbid affection of either of the two other sets of controlling organs, is equally demonstrable, and depends on similar principles. But it is needless to dwell longer on this subject. To every physiologist it is already familiar. It is known to him, that out of chyle of bad qualities, or deficient in quantity, a sufficient amount of good blood cannot be prepared; that if respiration be defective, the latter fluid cannot be duly vitalized; and that if the heart be enfeebled, it cannot throw the blood with the requisite force into every part of the system. Hence I repeat, that moral and intellectual education, which consists in amending the condition of the brain, and physical education, which is the improvement of the other parts of the body, are indispensable to the perfection of each other, and of course to that of the whole system. Physical education is to the other two what the root, trunk, and branches of the tree are to its leaves, blossoms, and fruit. It is the source and *sine qua non* of their existence. Injure or improve it, and you produce on them a kindred effect. Hence, physical education is far more important than is commonly imagined. Without a due regard to it, by which I mean a stricter and more judicious attention than is paid to it at present, man cannot attain the perfection of his nature. Ancient Greece might be cited in confirmation of this. May history and other forms of record be credited, the people of that country were, as a nation, physically and intellectually the most perfect of the human race. And there is reason to believe, that their unrivalled attention to physical education was highly influential in producing the result."

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## THE REV. R. M'GHEE'S "INGENIOUS DEVICE."

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ALL who pay the slightest attention to the political and religious proceedings of the day, must be aware of the zealous endeavours which a certain party have recently been making, once more to set the hearts of the good people of England in a flame against the abominations of Popery. The principal agents in this movement are Protestant clergymen from Ireland. Their main object is to raise an effectual opposition to the measures now in progress for the more just and liberal government of that country, especially for the correction of

some of the enormous abuses of its Church Establishment. In pursuing this object, they have displayed no lack of the qualities which usually belong to an interested or fanatical priesthood. They have seen that nothing would be so likely to serve their purpose, as the stirring up of religious enmity and hatred between large bodies of people. They have employed themselves in setting forth, in the strongest light, all the real or supposed iniquities of the Romish Church, past and present. They have charged the members of that Church in Ireland with a conspiracy to destroy every existing institution, and to bring all things back to a state of the lowest superstition, corruption, and slavery. They have accused the Romish clergy of giving countenance to the most detestable doctrines and practices, under the sanction of religion; in proof of which they have drawn forth from the obscurity and insignificance in which it was buried, an old book on Theology, by one Peter Dens, which it seems is still employed as a text book in some Irish Roman Catholic College.

All these means of raising an anti-Catholic storm in the land, however, had failed to succeed, to any thing like the extent which the chief promoters of the work desired. Considerable numbers, indeed, of the weakest and most inflammable of those who style themselves evangelical, began to experience great horror and to denounce great vengeance; but the mass of the population continued obstinately unmoved. The very last persons to perceive or to own this failure, would of course be the men who had crossed the Irish channel to agitate the whole nation on this subject. Yet one of these gentlemen, the redoubted Mr. O'Sullivan, does appear to have discovered that it was time to retreat; for after having met with sundry untoward incidents, at Brighton and elsewhere, he seems to have withdrawn himself quietly to his native land. Not so his worthy co-adjutor, the Rev. Robert M'Ghee, who claims, as we understand, the glory of having dragged to light Peter Dens and his Theology. He determined to make one more vigorous effort to stir his timorous hosts to battle. But on the very eve of the meeting appointed to be held for this purpose, in Exeter Hall, some penetrating friend of the reverend orator, evidently fearing that he was in want of ammunition, resolved to visit him with as-

sistance in the shape of a fresh supply of *authentic documents*. The visit was admirably timed, and the circumstances of it, as described by Mr. M'Ghee in his subsequent speech, were highly dramatic. It was midnight; the lamp of the studious orator was burning low, casting "a dim religious light" over the apartment in which he was sitting; his brain was feverish with preparatory meditation, and his whole frame was in a state of high nervous excitement. Just in the condition to scrutinize coolly and calmly the genuineness of a document, which chanced to answer his purpose excellently well! The visit of his friend was at first strongly resisted, as an unseasonable intrusion. But no denial would be taken. The door opened, and his friend entered, presenting a most important document, which had just come to hand, and the authenticity of which could be fully proved. This was an Encyclical Letter from the Pope to the Catholics of Ireland, in which his Holiness exhorts them to *affect*, indeed, all kinds of liberality and moderations toward their Protestant countrymen, for the sake of obtaining their present ends, but to be sure and remember that the said Protestants were detestable heretics, who all deserve to be burnt, and that no means of promoting the true Catholic faith could be unlawful. This was eagerly and gladly seized on by the reverend agitator. It was the very assistance he wanted. Not a glimmering of doubt seems to have crossed his mind respecting the genuineness of this letter. The visit of his friend, as he declared, appeared to him now like a special providence. The roof of Exeter Hall resounded next day with the demonstrations of the infamy of the Pope and the Catholics, drawn from this document, the authenticity of which was solemnly affirmed. The scene which was produced in the meeting by the reading of this letter, has been described as almost terrific. The gentlemen shouted, and the ladies were hysterical.

Most of our readers know the sequel. The pith of the story is, that this said Encyclical letter of the Pope was a gross and utter *forgery*; or more properly speaking, perhaps, it was what is commonly called a *hoax*. No such letter was ever sent from the Pope, nor did any body but Mr. M'Ghee and his misguided auditors ever suppose that it was. It had just been printed, in sport or in satire, by

a clergyman of Dublin, the Rev. Mr. Todd, who has since acknowledged himself the author, professed his perfect innocence of any design to deceive, and, in terms polite, expressed his wonder that any man should have been silly enough to think the letter genuine. Indeed, the very newspapers, at the moment the proceedings of the meeting were reported, warned the public of the *forgery*, as they termed it. Mr. M'Ghee himself, within twenty-four hours, was obliged to confess his own delusion ;—but, at the same time, (which appears to us by far the worst feature in the case,) he endeavoured to make light of the mischievous conduct into which he had been hurried,—now calling that, which before he had designated as a special gift of Providence, “an ingenious device of his friend,” and actually exhorting the Protestants of England still to peruse this letter, as *professing* to come from the Pope, that they might learn what a dreadful system is Popery !

This affair has a double aspect ;—it is ridiculous and it is serious. There is something sufficiently ludicrous in the weak and foolish blunder of the individual. But it is frightful to observe, to what a degree the moral and religious feelings of a large portion of the people, and even the peace of the country may be at the mercy of any fanatical disclaimer. The credulity, the ignorance and the passion, of the self-styled religious public, is at the present day absolutely alarming. We dare say Mr. M'Ghee is a pious, well-meaning man ; and from some subsequent communications in the papers, we see no reason to doubt that he is sincerely ashamed of his rashness in this instance. But we have yet seen no evidence, that he is at all aware of the dangerous state of his own mind, and of the feelings to which he would excite others,—thus eagerly to seize upon every thing which may tend to make the religion of four-fifths of his countrymen appear infamous, instead of seeking calmly to reform, enlighten, and conciliate them.

## UNITARIANISM IN FRANCE.

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[The following letter, copied from the *Standard* newspaper, of Saturday, July 23rd, shews that the profession of Unitarianism, in some form or other, is increasing in France, and at the same time that it is likely to meet with some legal or illegal resistance. The letter is *curious* in many respects; but those Frenchmen, as we are apt to think, are a strange people. How unaccountable does it seem to us, that in a country boasting of its liberty, any man should be allowed to hold himself irresponsible for his conduct because he is a Peer, and yet should be allowed to discharge such important civil functions as those of a Prefect, in which he may violate, almost with impunity, the dearest and most sacred rights of the citizens. But there is probably some mistake. M. Pillot's account of the Unitarians of England may serve to amuse our reader's.]—ED.

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*“To Baron Pasquier, President of the Chamber of Peers.*

Paris, July 14.

“ Monsieur le Baron,—I am obliged to demand justice from the Court of Peers, in consequence of a grave infraction of the Charter, and an attack on the inviolability of my dwelling, in consequence of the conduct of M. Auberon, Prefect of the Seine and Oise, one of the members of the Chamber of Peers, and who pleads his irresponsibility.

“ Under the Restoration the citizens were not exposed to this impediment, because it was known that the peerage was incompatible with the exercise of the inferior functions of the administration. The only exception was in favour of the ministerial functions.

“ The following is the fact:—On the 30th of May last the Mayor of Pecq, by formal authority, and by a letter from M. Auberon, replied to a demand which I had addressed to him, for the permission to open a chapel consecrated to the French *culte*, in the commune of Pecq, that the laws not being opposed to it, I was free to open the said chapel, in conforming myself to the laws and regulations prescribed for the religious *cultes*.

“ But, on the 17th of June, the Prefect of Seine and

Oise wrote to the Mayor of Pecq a letter, of which I received a copy, alleging that my *culte* had nothing either real or regular, and, therefore, it was necessary to close the meetings which I had established in a building belonging to me.

"I profess, Baron, the Unitarian *culte*, which has established itself in Great Britain, in the bosom of a powerful church, the existence of which is attested by the parliamentary debates relative to the Catholics of Ireland.

"But in that country where liberty is not a vain word, no authorities have imagined to oppose the opening of Unitarian Churches, which have become so numerous.

"It is even a well known fact, that the present Britannic cabinet is supported, in both Houses of Parliament, by the Dissenters, and particularly the Unitarians. It is, moreover, a known fact, that the *culte* is greatly in favour in the United States, and that it is publicly professed.

"It remains to be known whether the simple act of a Prefect, will be sufficiently powerful to give a contrary interpretation to our charter.

"I have, moreover, to complain of a second fact, and of a vexation quite private, of which I have been the victim.

"On the 30th of June last, the Prefect placed the seals on my house, although it is inviolable, according to the terms of a formal disposition, still in vigour, of the Constitution of the year VIII., and of the dispositions of the penal code.

"I addressed myself to the Juge d'Instruction of Versailles, in order to obtain redress. Hitherto I have obtained but verbal answers, notwithstanding that I have constituted myself plaintiff.

"The inaction of justice is obligatory, it is said, on account of the inviolable character of the functionary whose acts I condemn, and my complaints will not be listened to until I shall have obtained the authority required by the laws in vigour. This authority I come then to demand.

"I hope that you will not leave unanswered, in the high position in which you are placed, Baron, the complaint of an irreproachable citizen, who wishes to make use of one of the best rights granted by the charter.

"We are repeatedly told that religious sentiment is worthy of every protection,—that it can shew itself freely; the solution which my complaint may receive will serve as

a lesson to all Frenchmen who still entertain doubts as to the power of our institutions.

(Signed.) "I. J. PILLOT, Christian Minister,  
" Director of the French Chapel of Pecq."

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### DEVON AND CORNWALL UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

On Wednesday, July 13th, the annual meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Unitarian Association was holden at Collumpton. The state of the weather was happily such as to permit many friends from distant places to assemble, which is justly considered as one of the greatest advantages and pleasures which these meetings afford. The religious service of the morning was opened, with prayer and reading of the Scriptures, by the Rev. J. Cropper, of Exeter, and the Rev. H. Acton, offered up the general prayer ; after which a very able and impressive sermon was preached by the Rev. R. B. Aspland, of Bristol, from John xiv. v. 9. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The object of the preacher was to shew that Jesus is the moral image of God, and to deduce the right practical conclusions from so glorious a truth. The discourse was listened to with deep and gratified attention. At the conclusion of the religious service, the business of the Association was transacted in the chapel, Lieutenant Phillip Moore, R.N., in the Chair. The report was, on the whole, more favourable than for several years past ; and particular mention was made of the revived state of the cause in Topsham and Lympstone. In the afternoon, between thirty and forty gentlemen dined together at the Half Moon Inn, when the Chair was taken by Isaac Davy, Esq., of Fordton. Many addresses were delivered by the ministers and other gentlemen present ; and the attention of the company was especially called to the desirableness of giving support to the meritorious congregation at Devonport. Most of the persons present afterwards took tea together, in the Sunday School-rooms belonging to the chapel ; and the day was closed amidst great and mutual satisfaction.

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### TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

*After much serious deliberation, we have been induced, chiefly by promises of more efficient aid, to continue the publication of the "GOSPEL ADVOCATE." We earnestly hope that contributors, and others, who were wont to assist us, will now meet our efforts by renewing their own exertions. There are no ends to be served but the interests of truth and goodness.*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL. IV.

## “THE WORD OF GOD,”—WHAT IT IS,— AND IS NOT.

“The Word of God,” is an expression coming loudly and frequently from the lips of a certain class of modern religionists. It is a kind of set phrase with them, by the constant use of which, through the assumptions and associations connected with it, they evidently produce more effect on the minds of multitudes, than they would be likely ever to produce by all the wisdom and argument of which they are masters. If the sense in which this expression is commonly applied, however, be correct, and if the uses which are made of it be consistent with truth and charity, we ought not to complain of its popular efficiency. But if, on the other hand, the way in which it is continually employed be fallacious and presumptuous, we cannot do wrong in seeking to shew why and how it is so, and endeavouring to expose *some* of the many evil consequences to which it leads. We think the latter supposition comes much nearest to the true state of the case, and therefore we shall here offer a few remarks on the subject.

“I positively deny,” (we quote the language of a noted enthusiast of the self-styled *evangelical* school,) “that any man or men, any church or churches, any human authorities or documents on earth, are the accredited preservers and depositaries of the true doctrines, the vital and essential truths, of Christ’s religion; but I maintain that the only depository, the only authority, to which man is to be referred for these truths, is the Holy Word of his Creator; all other documents, all creeds, all confessions of faith, are but as cups and vessels;—the word of the eternal God is the only fountain of living waters.” And when he has said this, he flatters himself and his followers, that he has struck a vigorous blow at the corrupt dominations of Popery, that he has vindicated true freedom of inquiry

and true liberty of conscience. But it is only necessary to listen to him a few moments longer, and you perceive that, under this very mode of expression, he has cloaked the most puerile superstitions, and assumed the infallibility of his own judgment on various points of dogmatic theology. “I maintain,” he cries again, “that the Word of God, and not any human articles or decrees, is the sole standard of divine truth, the sole authority in matters of Christian faith; but then I maintain likewise that the Word of God must be followed implicitly; all its doctrines, however mysterious, must be received in their plain, obvious signification; no exercise of the carnal reason must be allowed in explaining or modifying the sacred verities so clearly delivered in the pure Word of God.” This, too, sounds very plausible; and numbers highly approve it, as the language of extreme reverence and humility towards the God of all truth. But here also lurk the most groundless notions respecting the character of the Scriptures; here also it is assumed that the speaker’s own general views of Christian doctrine are infallibly right, that *he* alone has meekly submitted his understanding to divine authority, that *he* is an oracle of heavenly wisdom, that all who do not mainly agree with him in religious opinion, must be proud, carnal, blind, rebellious men. Such are the mischievous fallacies, and the sources of bad feeling, which are hidden under the present orthodox and popular uses of this expression “the Word of God.”

First, then, in regard to the *sense* of this expression. What is meant by the “Word of God?”—The answer of most persons, if freely and spontaneously given, would be this:—“The Word of God” is the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, the Books of the Old and New Testament. Now, let us examine this statement to the bottom, that we may understand, if possible, the exact meaning which it is intended to convey. You say that the Bible is the “Word of God.” What, the written books themselves, which compose the volume called the Bible? the verbal characters imprinted on those pages, or the sounds which they represent. Is it thus *literally* that you mean to designate the Bible the “Word of God.” And if so, do you confine this reverend title to the Bible in its original languages? or do you extend it also to the English Version, and to all other translations, or to

any, and to which? These are not trifling questions, since you declare that consequences, which may effect our eternal welfare, depend upon our implicit submission to the authority of the "Word of God." Explain to us, therefore, precisely what you mean, by giving this solemn designation to the Bible.

There cannot be a doubt that the answer of most persons, if freely stated, would again be to this effect:—Yes, the books of Scripture themselves, the words therein written or printed, or the sounds which they represent, these sacred writings are the "Word of God." And many, doubtless, would contend for the description of these honours to every faithful translation of the Bible; whilst some might wish to restrict this name and authority to the Bible in its original tongues, though very inconsistently with the practical uses they are continually making of this expression. We must altogether object, however, to the practice of denominating the Bible, in this literal sense, the "Word of God." It is a practice utterly without sanction from the Scriptures themselves, at variance with indubitable facts, and giving countenance to the most superstitious notions concerning those books. It is a custom, we say, for which there is no sanction or example to be found in the Scriptures. Common as this expression is, especially in the books of the New Testament, there is not a single instance of its being there applied to the books or writings themselves. That such could not have been its primary signification, must be evident to every one, from the recollection of the fact that it appears from the "Gospels" to have been repeatedly employed by our Saviour, in reference to the Christian dispensation, long before any of the books of the New Testament were composed. Neither is there any instance of its bearing this sense in the subsequent writings of his apostles. Nor can it be shown, that Christ or his apostles ever gave this name to any verbal, *viva voce*, statement of the doctrines and commandments of the gospel, made by them, considered as so many words, previously to their being committed to writing. As they uniformly employed the expression, the "Word of God" meant the *doctrine* itself which they taught, the truth, the spiritual instruction itself, which they delivered to the world,—Christ, as we admit, by immediate authority from God, and his

apostles by immediate authority from him. They have never bestowed this name on the mere language, the mere words, vocal or written, in which they thought proper to express the truths and exhortations of the gospel. What right, then, have any men to make such an application of the name? It was, (if we may say so,) the intellectual and moral substance of the gospel revelation, which Christ and his apostles denominated the "Word of God,"—and not the identical sounds, or visible characters, by which they sought to communicate this heavenly wisdom from their own minds to the minds of their disciples. We are confident that this will be acknowledged by all who patiently consult the Scriptures on the subject:—and the distinction which has now been pointed out, as we shall see presently, is all-important.

If this custom of styling the Bible the "Word of God," cannot be defended by Scriptural sanctions, can it, then, be any better supported on grounds of truth, reason, or natural propriety? We believe not. How can the Bible, in this verbal and literal sense, be called the "Word of God," when it is unquestionable, as far as the authorship of the several books can be determined, that it is the word of Moses, of Daniel, of Matthew, Luke, Paul, Peter, John, and other men? This again is not a trifling but a most important distinction, when it is considered that we are now speaking, not of the actual doctrine contained in the Bible, but simply of the verbal expression of that doctrine comprising the books of Scripture. This is surely the word of men, and therefore not of God. The orthodox believer may say indeed, (and we shall go far with him in admitting the fact,) that they were holy and inspired men, teaching always the will of God. This consideration must impart a sacred value to their instructions, when we are satisfied that we are in possession of their true meaning;—but still the literal medium by which they have endeavoured to express this meaning to our minds, is their own,—their own speech, or their own written word. There is no avoiding this conclusion, except by at once adopting the hypothesis of a strict and entire *verbal* inspiration of the sacred writers, that the very words and phrases which they employed were immediately dictated to them by the spirit of God;—an hypothesis which the honest and

judicious of all parties have long since acknowledged to be wholly untenable ;—an hypothesis which it is impossible to carry in our minds, during a serious perusal of the Scriptures, without being, at almost every line, convinced of its erroneousness and shocked by its absurdity. For persons of the least intelligence, in the present times, to give countenance to this notion, to send unthinking people to the reading of the Bible under such a false impression, can scarcely be regarded otherwise than as a wilful connivance at the grossest credulity and superstition. The practice of representing the entire Bible, literally considered, as the immediate inspired “Word of God,” to every syllable of which men are bound to listen with the same reverence as though it were heard proceeding from the voice of the Almighty,—this practice, we say, besides being generally founded in superstition, must appear to a reflecting mind almost blasphemous, when it is remembered that even the human authorship of many parts of the Bible is so doubtful, or so utterly unknown. The very same course of inquiry and criticism, which proves the authenticity of some books, and the most important books of Scripture, proves also that the authenticity of some of the other books cannot be assumed with any confidence. Yet the entire volume of the Bible, as now circulated amongst us, is commonly referred to, with all possible boldness, as being literally the “Word of God!” The interests of truth and piety can never be permanently served by the help of such delusions. Once more we assert, that the *doctrine* of Christ and his apostles, the *instruction* which they were commissioned to impart to men, when we have ascertained it through the medium of the language of Scripture, —this is the true “Word of God.”

Let not the self-styled Orthodox believer now suddenly turn upon us, and exclaim, that *this was all he ever meant* ;—that he never intended to apply this venerable name to the mere *words* of Scripture, but only to the *sense* which those words express. Such an apology, though we have often known it resorted to, cannot be justly allowed : —it has no foundation in truth. We reply to such a person, that it is perfectly evident this was not all which he meant, nor that which he meant at all. It cannot have been so, because he has appealed to the Bible, under the

designation of the “Word of God,” as the *standard* and *test* of true Christian doctrine, the infallible *criterion* of the divine verities of the gospel. And how is it possible, that any thing should be a standard, a test, a criterion of *itself*? When he has repeatedly said, “the Word of God” is the sole standard of divine truth, the sole authority in matters of Christian faith,—it is absurd and false to say afterwards, that by the “Word of God” he meant divine truth. It is plain that he did not mean any such thing; or if he did, that his mind is subject to a confusion of ideas, which renders him incapable of understanding himself, and unfit to teach others.

We must here, however, guard against a possible misapprehension of our own meaning. We have no intention of denying the principle, that the Scriptures are, in a certain sense, the sole authoritative standard of Christian truth. We cheerfully acquiesce in this principle; we hold it sacred as the fundamental principle of Protestantism and of all real liberty of conscience. It is by the careful study of the Scriptures alone, that we can ascertain what are the doctrines, or commandments, or promises, which were inculcated by Christ and his apostles, and which therefore we, as professed disciples of Jesus, are willing to revere. In this sense, the Scriptures are the highest test, the sole authorized criterion, of the truths of the gospel. But then they are so, regarded not as the “Word of God,” but as the words of Matthew and John, Peter and Paul, the words of evangelists and apostles, who faithfully record the deeds and sayings of Christ, and give us the benefit of their own inspired knowledge of his heavenly doctrine. The “Word of God” is this heavenly doctrine itself, when we have learnt it from the teaching of the evangelists and apostles, by diligently using all just and rational means for the correct interpretation of their words. This distinction, we repeat, becomes all-important, when we consider the practical evils which arise from overlooking it. The evils of spiritual presumption, of which we at present complain, result chiefly from confounding the actual truths of the Christian revelation, with the mere writings in which the correct knowledge of those truths is to be sought.

But let us now proceed another stage in our inquiry.

It being thus settled, that the true Word of God" is not the letter of Scripture, but the actual truths of the gospel,—let us next inquire where those truths exist. We shall be asked, perhaps, whether we do not allow, after all which has been said, that the truth which constitutes the "Word of God" exists in the Bible? But we must be permitted to reply, that even this assertion,—that divine truth *is in the Bible*,—unless it be made with due discrimination, will involve a gross fallacy, from which very injurious consequences may follow. It may be well enough to speak in this vague manner, for general and popular ends; but, strictly speaking, the assertion is false and absurd. A moment's reflection will shew us that it is so. Strictly speaking, divine truth, as all truth, is a mental possession; it is the accurate correspondence between the ideas, or conceptions, of intelligent beings, and things as they really are; it is plain, therefore, that it can exist nowhere but in the *minds* of intelligent beings. Some expression of it, indeed, more or less perfect,—the visible signs, by which it has been intended to express this divine truth, that it might thus be conveyed from some minds to others,—may exist in the Bible; but nothing more can exist there. The Bible, strictly speaking, is nothing more than a book, a mass of paper or parchment, with certain legible characters imprinted thereon. The truth itself, which those characters were designed to express, does and can exist only in the mental apprehensions of some intelligent beings.

Having determined this point, then, which appears to us self-evident, we may now advance another step in the inquiry. In *whose* mind, in the mind of what intelligent being, or beings, does this truth which constitutes the "Word of God" exist? We answer, in the first place, that *certainly, infallibly*, it exists only in the mind of God himself, and in the mind of Christ, and in the minds of the inspired evangelists and apostles, if we suppose them to be still existing in a state of perfect consciousness and memory. These divine and human beings alone can know *infallibly*, what truths the one communicated, and the others received and taught. We, and all other men, can know this truth only by means of our own fallible inferences and deductions from the words of Scripture; and therefore not with absolute certainty. It must not be con-

cluded from this, however, that we take upon ourselves to declare, or to insinuate, that the knowledge of divine truth, as revealed by Christ, is now possessed by few or none of his followers on earth. We mean no such thing. We believe that it is possessed, in all essential particulars, by thousands and millions of men, and by ourselves amongst others. This, however, is *only belief*, not infallible certainty. It is a belief which has been attained, and is still held, by us and all other men, under circumstances which expose us to possible mistake,—in some cases, perhaps, and on some particular subjects, even to probable mistake. These considerations ought to affect our minds with humility, moderation, and charity, in regard both to our own opinions and the opinions of others.

Finally, then, what *is* the “Word of God,” and what *is it not?* It is *not* the Bible, the books of Scripture of the Old and New Testament, or any part of them. There is no sanction or example for any such use of the expression in the Scriptures themselves; such a use of it is altogether founded on some of the darkest errors of the darkest ages; it can only tend to foster groundless superstitions, hostile alike to truth and charity; it should therefore be discountenanced, and banished as soon as possible, from the popular language of religion. The “Word of God” *is* the instruction, the heavenly doctrine itself, which Christ and his apostles taught the world, under an especial mission from God. It follows from these two positions, especially the latter, that for Christians to send one another to the Bible, under the name and character of the “Word of God,” as to an infallible test and standard of divine truth, is a practice fraught not only with delusion, but with absurdity. The “Word of God” *is* that divine truth itself, and therefore cannot be a test or standard of it. There is, to all uninspired men, *no infallible* criterion of this divine truth, inasmuch as their best knowledge of it must be founded on their own or other fallible men’s interpretation of the words of Scripture;—it must ultimately depend, at best, on a process of their own reason and judgment. They may pretend to some higher and more certain sources of knowledge, but it is clearly impossible that they should possess any such. It were wiser in Christians, it would tend greatly to their mutual improvement and happiness, if

they would content themselves with that degree of knowledge, or belief, which is really placed within their power of attainment; and if, instead of aspiring to a state which they cannot reach on earth, they would humbly endeavour to regulate their ways and dispositions according to their actual condition. The “Word of God” is known with absolute certainty only by God himself, and by Christ, and by those to whom we may suppose that God has imparted this knowledge by direct inspiration. But since this absolute knowledge is not attainable by uninspired mortals, what is the “Word of God” practically considered? what is it to every individual Christian’s own mind, as it ought to be the object of his reverence, and may be fairly expected to influence his feelings and conduct? We answer,—It is that which he himself understands to be the true doctrine of Christianity; that which in the serious exercise of his own private judgment, with the diligent use of the best means, especially the rational study of the Scriptures, he himself believes to be the true doctrine promulgated by Christ and his apostles. This, to every man individually, is the “Word of God.” To attempt, by spiritual threats and condemnations, to compel him to revere any thing else under this name, is presumptuous folly and bigotry. These, as it appears to us, are the only broad and safe principles of liberty of conscience. Here is the only sure method of arriving, if not at the end of controversy, yet certainly at the end of persecution, intolerance, and religious animosity. When Christians, universally, cease to claim for their own dogmas the reverence due only to divine truth, as every man understands that truth, they will then be prepared for the reign of universal spiritual liberty and peace. The “Word of God” will then have its shrine in the sanctuary of every believer’s own heart, the object of his free, sincere, and earnest veneration.

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## LINES

## ON VISITING GULLIFORD CHAPEL, NEAR LYMPSTONE.

THE short-lived Spring was bursting into Summer,  
 And all Creation teem'd with new delight.  
 It was the hallow'd Sabbath ! Forth we went,  
 My friend and I, with solemn musings led,  
 To where, in Nature's loveliest haunts, mid sights  
 And sounds impregnate with th' Almighty's praise,  
 There stood a simple Chapel, where of yore  
 Throng'd the surrounding neighbourhood to breathe  
 Their *undivided* praise to Him, the One  
 Great Lord of all ! But now, well-nigh deserted,  
 A few, a very few, remaining still  
 To their pure faith and simple doctrines staunch,  
 By Orthodoxy's potion undebauch'd,  
 Met to uplift their hearts to the ONE GOD.

Much did I marvel at His hidden ways,  
 Permitting thus, to purblind sight so strange,  
 His worship into decadence to fall.  
 But when I thought of His mysterious will—  
 A GOD OF LOVE—yet letting Battle rage,  
 Scattering the seeds of Pestilence around,  
 Loosing the Whirlwind with remorseless wrath,  
 Yielding to Death and Desolation oft  
 The trident of the Sea, and giving up  
 Whole cities to the gorging Earthquake, and  
 To her twin-brother the Volcano fiend,—  
 Yea, when I thought how *all* subserv'd His purpose,  
 From thence distilling Mercy's holiest dews,  
 And from the womb of contrarieties  
 Thus bringing forth his Mystery of Love,—

My heart bow'd down with adoration deep,  
Nor dar'd to question ought of Infinite !

Even as Winter's sterile reign gives way,  
And to some purpose aids the Summer queen  
In her luxuriant sway : so doubtless thus,  
In God's own time, His might will blazon forth,

Fit temple for th' Almighty's praise ! or say  
Religion's shrine in Nature's temple rear'd !  
Well judged he who rais'd thee here, aloof  
From din of town, in sacred solitude,  
Where the lorn heart, by contemplation led,  
Impress'd by Nature's sweet solemnities,  
May yield itself meet sacrifice to Heav'n.  
Sweet spot ! with song of birds and breath of flow'r's  
Redolent ; and solemn whispering of trees,  
That with their leafy tongues murmur strange language,  
—To him who doth interpret it aright  
The heart's own language—O how little known !—  
Sweet spot ! with thine associations sweet !  
(How soothingly they now steal o'er my soul !)  
Never from memory's tablet wilt thou be  
Eras'd ; but bloom perpetually there,  
A paradise of bliss, in which my heart  
Shall oft seek refuge from its many woes.

*Exeter.*

J. L. L.

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## ESSAY ON RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.

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To a pious and reflecting spirit few considerations can be more interesting, than the power of our divine religion to adapt itself to the various classes of human minds, modified as they are by the endless diversity of circumstances.

Thus the essential unity of faith and devotion to God,

and our Saviour, has been exhibited in all times and nations, by sincere and earnest truth searchers, under an immense variety of forms and aspects. The same divine light of truth has taken the colouring of minds, it has pervaded and purified and so mingled its peculiar element with the moral and intellectual characteristics of individuals, as to defy the analysis of the philosopher, who would discover a real harmony among so many apparent contradictions.

Yet we hold it to be a fixed and indubitable principle, that such a harmony does exist throughout the universal Church,—and that an indestructible sincerity of purpose, an unquenched desire and aspiration after truth, has bound and still binds the spirits of just men together, with a tie that cannot be broken by any oppositions of opinion, or any clashings of sentiment.

A confidence in this principle of unity, easily recognizable by the Deity, however obscure to mortals, has always consoled our minds, while reviewing the records of the Church. We have loved to reflect on that hidden source of reunion and reconciliation, which is destined to attain a universal and immortal victory, when the passions and prejudices that have opposed its progress are swept into oblivion.

We have applied this cheerful and animating principle to all the polemical controversies that have distracted the Church. And we have especially applied it to the partitions that exist between the evangelical and unitarian doctrines. It is with pleasure we imagine, that an essential concord and sympathy has united, and will unite for eternity, the sincere of both professions, and it would give us pain inexpressible if we conceived with some Christians that no principle of reconciliation could traverse the wide plain of their differences.

Let us conceive, then, that the divine faith of revelation was intended by the beneficence of Providence thus to multiply, and thus to be diversified. Then shall we rather glory in its boundless capacity of adaptations, and its Proteus-like correspondence with all the varieties of mental temperament, than bewail the existence of this variety. We may be sure, that as far as it is true, faith's natural tendency is to harmonize whatever is discordant, by purifying whatever is erroneous. And that its influence must

sooner or later destroy any variety which leads to error, and every diversity that propagates discord.

If we adopt a theory like this, we may rejoice to see religious moral and intellectual excellence in all possible forms of combination. We may behold, without a shadow of misgiving, these consummate excellences exhibiting themselves in men of most opposite sects and parties, and exult when we observe that piety is not limited by systems of divinity, nor truth by the casuistries of logic.

We believe that Providence has permitted the existence of so many sects and parties for the very purpose of exciting mutual emulation, and of calling forth the best powers of each by keen and constant rivalry. If so, the very contentions so lamented by the benevolent and the peaceful, may be instrumental of ultimate happiness beyond all powers of calculation.

F. B.

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#### THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

*Concluded from page 88.*

Supposing the objector were to shift his ground—were to pass from the savage to the civilized world, and point to the low state of morals in comparison with the progress and height of civilization, he might be fearlessly met there also. Perhaps he would argue, that the moral sense could not have originally existed in the mind of man because his moral state did not bespeak all the improvement under which his intellectual powers shine forth. The deficiency in this respect may be admitted without allowing the strength of the position founded upon it. Indeed, the low state of morals in the ancient civilized world, and even amongst those nations in which the highest civilization and refinement existed, is a fact too notorious to be called in question. But it must be observed, that this civilization and refinement were possessed rather by the privileged classes than by the great mass of the people. Learning was monopolized by the schools of philosophy and the priesthood: the blessings of intellectual culture were not diffused as they now are over the great mass of society. The priesthood, it is not too much to say, rather availed themselves of their learning to enslave the people than to exalt them to moral and spiritual freedom; and the philoso-

phers were more eager to invent systems and to found schools upon them, than to bring their systems to bear on the improvement of mankind. The wise and the disputer of the world were often guided by variety and ambition in their researches and contests; knowledge was sought for the sake of display rather than for its use to morals, and indeed, no essential improvement in this respect could possibly have been contemplated by the cultivators of knowledge whilst they cherished a sovereign contempt for all the inferior classes of society. The sentiment "I hate the profane vulgar" was not confined to the breast of the poet, whose unblushing pen expressed it. Thus among the most highly polished nations of antiquity knowledge was hoarded by the few to the injury of the many; and if we bear in mind what has been asserted, that the influence of the priesthood, instead of warming and cherishing the plant of human virtue, too frequently blighted and withered it, oursurprise at its slow growth is sensibly diminished. And it is important to remark that the Gentile nations of antiquity were not in possession of those strong motives to virtuous action which the Christian religion supplies to her followers. Even Philosophy herself threw a dark and dismal shade over the future; and men were left to the force of present views and feelings deprived of the counter-acting principle which a future life supplies.

Under these circumstances it is unreasonable to look for a very high degree of morality among the civilized Gentiles of the ancient world, particularly if we advert to the state of the Christian world, and estimate the degree of immorality and crime that, with all the advantages possessed, prevails there. In fact, the generality of mankind never act up to the principles they hold. If these are high, their conduct is frequently and vastly inferior: if they are low, it is still lower. By the very highest principles the Gentiles could not be actuated, for they had them not in possession; and there were other causes besides those of which we have spoken, to chill the warmth of virtuous feeling and to benumb the moral sense, at the same time that civilization was exerting herself to excite its vigour and bring it into full exercise.

On the whole, no arguments can be drawn from the state of mankind in any age, of sufficient force to disprove

the fact that the knowledge of good and evil is an inherent faculty. In the most degenerate state of mankind it has not been obliterated ; however far they have removed themselves from all that is intellectual and good, however low they have sunk themselves in barbarism and vice, this sense has still existed, though in a dormant state in their bosoms, and again kindled up, like the almost extinguished flame, with some degree of life and activity. If custom and habit, have thrown their fetters over it and prevented its dictates from being, in all cases, free and uniform, the effect was natural though to be lamented ; for to custom and habit, and we may add, to a peculiarity of circumstances, are to be chiefly attributed the discordant opinions which men have held respecting virtue, and their opposite practices. They have prevented that consentaneous agreement which, on the subject of morals, might in theory have been expected, to exist among mankind.

The knowledge of good and evil once allowed to be a natural faculty, the means by which it is improved and rendered powerful are evident. It is affected by circumstances, and these either increase or diminish its sensibility according as they are favourable or otherwise. Where the mind of man makes a backward movement, and is gradually losing the advantages of culture, the tone of the moral sense is lowered in a proportionate degree. On the other hand, where civilization and refinement, are spreading themselves, wherever knowledge reflects its glorious light, the moral powers share in the general improvement of the mind, they sympathize with it, they acquire and exercise a keener sensibility. They are thus subject to the same law, which govern all the bodily and mental powers. There is a strict analogy between them. Where corporeal strength is often brought into use, that strength is considerably increased. The frequent exercise of one or other of the senses renders it exceedingly acute. And since the acquisition of knowledge stimulates all the mental powers, and is indeed more frequently moral than strictly intellectual, the power of discerning between good and evil must of necessity become more vigorous and acute also. In some cases it keeps pace with the mental advancement, and would do so in all, did not passion and prejudice continually place themselves in opposition and obstruct its progress. Hence, in the ancient world some of the wisest philosophers were at

the same time the best of men. Among these may be mentioned Zoroaster the founder of wisdom among the Persians; Confucius, the Chinese sage, who by his moral doctrine and exemplary conduct obtained an immortal name; Pythagoras, who held that the design and object of all moral precepts is to lead men to the imitation of God; Socrates who raised his system of morals on the firm basis of religion, and taught that felicity is only to be derived from wisdom which consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue; and Plato who contended that the highest good of man consists in the contemplation and knowledge of the first good, which is God, that the possession of this knowledge is happiness, and the end of it to render man as like to God as the condition of human nature will permit.

In the midst of a crowd of vain and selfish beings, these men stand forward to view, and challenge the admiration of mankind. They are redeeming spots on the dark page of ancient history; they are surrounded with the rays of intellectual and moral grandeur; and as they lived many ages before the great Teacher of truth and righteousness made his appearance on the earth, they are unexceptionable and illustrious proofs of the existence of the moral sense in the human mind, and of the high tone to which it may be raised by judicious culture.

No farther argument or illustration is perhaps necessary to convince us that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was planted in the world. Mankind ate of its fruit and sought its shelter. Revelation has been to it as the refreshing dew and vivifying sun, and its fruit has been more abundant and of more exquisite flavour. In plainer language, revealed religion has corrected the errors respecting virtue into which men fell when the light of nature was their only guide. It has enlarged the first principles of virtuous conduct which, in the opinion of Socrates, *are common to all mankind and the laws of God*: having impressed these more deeply on the mind and given them additional authority, it has made them of more easy application and guided them to more certain results. The latest aids we have received of this nature, of which Jesus Christ was the honored bearer, have left us nothing to desire either for our illumination or advancement. They have

quickened in a vast degree the sensibilities of the moral powers, and the knowledge of good and evil is perfect to him who improves his original perceptions in the school of Christ—by his discipline and assistance whose life was one unbroken scene of moral worth and grandeur. Confusedly as men wandered in former times, under the guidance of a heated imagination rather than deliberate judgment, they are now preserved from error, the light of Christianity penetrates and fills their souls. It causes them to behold their true interest and glory and happiness. It leads them to the discovery of all that is excellent and noble in human nature; it excites them to the diligent cultivation of their mental and moral powers; it reveals to them the perfection of God and requires them to reflect his image from themselves. By these means it accelerates the improvement of our race, and urges it on with rapid steps to its true exaltation and happiness; and what a wonderful proof it is of the benignity of our Divine Ruler that he has made this admirable religion the instrument of perfecting that which he has designed concerning us! In proportion as its authority is acknowledged and its influence felt, will the true refinement and felicity of our species he embraced; and the time may come when the moral disorder which is now too prevalent in the world shall be scarcely known, and its inhabitants so far act upon their knowledge of good and evil as to display an integrity and holiness, and share a happiness, of which we have at present but little conception. Is it too much to hope that the benevolence which is the grand feature of the gospel of Christ shall become the universal rule of action? But improved as men may become in all those things which are approved to be most excellent and holy, the religion of Jesus will still continue to cherish and invigorate the moral sense, and still place before them some attainment of a nature superior to any they have made. Herein its excellence shines conspicuous. It bends to the circumstances of the wayfaring man and the ignorant; it rises to the highest elevation, and far beyond it, of the most towering intellect and the most heroic virtue; to the possessor of the latter and the former it gives their highest privileges; it is to both the source of their chief improvement and their purest bliss.

W.

## ON SIMPLICITY OF MANNERS.

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ONE of the greatest banes of civilized society is an excessive refinement of manners, arising from a needless and fastidious abandonment of natural simplicity. Nor is it the least among those mighty services which the Gospel was designed to render to the human race, that it tends, in its precepts and its spirit, powerfully to counteract this evil. Very inadequately indeed do those Christians conceive of the design and scope of the institution of Jesus, who imagine that they are fulfilled in the condemnation and restraint of such gross immoralities as are forbidden in the Mosaic decalogue, while in other respects the manners and behaviour of the disciple continue to resemble those of the world. To avoid those flagrant vices is but as an elementary lesson in a discipline which forms us to sincerity, innocence, benignity, humility, moderation, and self-denial. It is such graces as these, and not common morality, that are the peculiar traits of the Christian character. It is by these that we know the Christian.

Now it is in the possession and cultivation of these graces, that the foundation is laid of that comparative simplicity of manners, by which true Christians have at all times been more or less distinguished from mere men of the world, but which is displayed in greater or less perfection according to the varying grades of Christian attainment. But let us enlarge a little on a few particulars.

How bright and beautiful a grace is Christian sincerity ! It was in admiration of it that Jesus exclaimed, when he saw Nathaniel, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !" But of this grace the character of Christ himself was the most illustrious of all examples. Is there a shadow of deceit, or the least trace of dissimulation, to be met with in all his history ! Therefore it is said, "that he was without sin, neither was *guile* found in his mouth." But do we always act as if we were equally enamoured of this virtue ? Whence, then, our well-bred flatteries, our unmeaning compliments, our hollow professions, our dexterous evasions, our decent dissimulations, our fashionable falsehoods ? Why do we affect to be influenced by other than our real motives ? Why do we give place to permanent estrangement and ill-will, rather than deal frankly with our brother

respecting the cause of our offence ? Why do we smile when we dislike, and assent where we disapprove ? Why does our pusillanimous silence so often give consent to what in our hearts we condemn ? All this, and much more, is because we are far from perfect in that lovely and noble grace of sincerity, which makes a man content to appear what he is, and scorns for fear or favor to submit to the pollution of deceit. To the man of absolute sincerity, true dignity and honor do indeed belong : a divine simplicity appears in all his behaviour, and his word is the repose of those who converse with him. There is nothing, for certain, in which Christian honor is more concerned than this ; because to be sincere requires in many cases not only purity of intention, but great firmness, courage, and magnanimity. The Christian therefore who covets the greatness of his own character, and would yield to no man in the love of true honor, should bend his soul intensely to love and cherish this virtue. And in so doing, he will take the surest road to a Christian simplicity of manners.

Kindness and love are near akin to sincerity, for he who feels kindly and intends well to others, has little occasion, as assuredly he will have little disposition, to deceive them. But the absence of these qualities, and the spirit of ill-will which replaces them, are not only displayed in the form of insincerity, but corrupt our manners in divers other ways. From this fountain flow that coldness, reserve, and suppression of natural affection, which pass for a part of politeness. "Good-nature," the world says, "is a fool :" and we are afraid to betray even the kind affections which we feel, lest we should be thought weak, or have advantage taken of us. Hence the prevailing heartlessness of our social intercourse. Hence, too, the reign of *punctilio*. It is the want of prevailing kindness which makes us so fearful of offending, so easily offended, and swells into points of the utmost importance in our conventional manners, trifles in themselves light as air. That world which has branded good-nature with contempt, receives the opposite quality of ill-nature, thinly disguised in the form of well-bred ridicule, *innuendo*, and detraction, with great complacency. That world which taunts forgiveness with pusillanimity, prescribes with exactness, and exacts with rigor, the processes of resentment and mortal revenge. Is it

not manifest that whoever would fulfil the law of Christian love, must form his manners by a very different rule, a rule of comparative simplicity? Filled with kindness and goodwill towards those around him, he needs not the stratagems and devices, the guards and reserves, to which others resort, either to do injuries or to repel them.

Innocence, like love, thinketh no evil, and in her artless frankness and negligence there is less of shame, than in prudery with all her reserves and proprieties. Who are so suspicious of evil as those who are most conscious of it in themselves? *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* Those who are most zealous for maintaining the conventional forms of virtue, are often among the least tenacious of its substance. The example of many countries is in proof. The sensuality of the East has almost buried the female sex alive, and even on the other side of our channel it is said to be held indecorous for a *brother and sister* to walk out together. Such facts should lead us to cherish that comparative freedom of our own manners which is, in truth, the effect and the evidence of true virtue. It is Christianity, laying its purifying restraints on the heart itself, which dispenses with the need of so much external precaution, and makes it appear what it is, a token of shame.

Nothing complicates our manners more ridiculously than *pride*. This makes a thousand things improper to be done which are in themselves perfectly natural, innocent, and useful. What can be more truly absurd than the predicament of a modern fine gentleman or lady when in distress to get a small parcel carried a few yards distance! It is true they have legs and hands as well as others, and the weight of the package is nothing, but their legs and arms are *tabooed*, as it were, by pride, and they would almost as soon submit to have them amputated, as employ them in doing so useful but vulgar a thing as carrying a parcel. Pride does many other fantastic things. It makes it appear shocking to many to be seen using their own limbs, and makes them prefer being enclosed and drawn about in portable boxes called carriages, rather than indulge in the pleasant and healthful exercise of walking. Pride teaches us to disguise our domestics in gaudy dresses like mountebanks, which we call *liveries*, in order, forsooth, that by thus fixing on their backs the badge of servitude,

we may display our own state in their degradation. Pride teaches us what we are apt to think and call a becoming *hauteur* and reserve in conversation with those of inferior stations, as if freedom of personal communication were not a thing naturally fitting for all who share in common the nature of man. But as it is, the most silly, weak, and vicious man, of a certain rank and manners, is preferable company to the most intelligent and virtuous individual who has the misfortune to be of a lower caste. Pride, that it may duly degrade the poor worms who fancy themselves exalted, teaches us to ape the fooleries of fashion, and while we turn our backs scornfully on those beneath us, bids us stoop to pick up and invest ourselves as it were with the cast-off clothes of those above, and please ourselves in copying their whims and caprices after they have for a year abandoned them. Truly if we incur their contempt, we have deserved it.

Pride is assisted in its work of corruption by *luxury*. It may, indeed, seem fool-hardy to name with censure this favorite of the modern sages, whom ages of well-earned infamy have not prevented from at length emerging into a glitter of ephemeral reputation. Where and how the character of this notorious dame has been white-washed, we must leave the economists to tell. In the meantime we may take liberty to doubt whether the ancient and well approved virtues of plainness, frugality, and simplicity of living, will, in future days, be judged to have been beneficially replaced by any substitutes which she may introduce. Self-indulgence and display, are at present, undoubtedly in the ascendant, and regulate house and equipage, table and dress. Should a hint be dropped respecting the vast amount of human labor that is consumed in providing these luxuries, an answer is ready : for the economists have discovered that labor is the *chief good*, and therefore the more of it the better. Consistently enough, charity towards all classes of men, assumes, under this system, the form of a resolution to make them work as hard as possible, and to extract out of the sweat of their brows as much as we can for our money ; and though some may still admire the maxim *in caelo quies*, nearly all are agreed that there ought to be no rest on earth. So far have

the sophistries of a crude and half-enlightened science\* succeeded in subverting maxims founded on the common sense and experience of mankind, and recommending to men rather than self-indulgence which is the bane of virtue, than that self-denial which is all but its essence. To the mass of mankind in civilized communities, the excessive toil which their daily necessities impose upon them, is, perhaps, the greatest physical evil of their lives. He who, having good things in his hands, which it is in his power to bestow freely on his toiling brethren, instead of doing so, says, Nay : but it will be better if I make them *earn* every thing I may give, by a proportional share of labor employed in ministering to my luxuries : this man, I say, may think himself a philanthropist, but I think he must also own that his is a sort of philanthropy which has but little claim to the praise of virtue. Very different, at least, was the spirit of his philanthropy, who, " though he was rich yet for our sakes lived in poverty, that we through his poverty might be rich :" " who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Him ten thousand worthies have followed in the spirit of humility and self-denial : but the nineteenth century opens with a new Christianity, happily reconciled at length with riches, ostentation, and luxury.

Perhaps, however, the old Christianity was the best. And if that be so, the foregoing remarks may help us to perceive, that before the Gospel has done its work, and shown the extent of good that it can effect in human society, there must take place a revolution in the *manners* of Christians. At present we may say that while religion has done much for *morals*, it has as yet but little affected *manners*. Manners have been settled by the world. The church has adopted the world's code. But if, in importance, manners are second only to morals, which is to estimate them lower than some have done, the reform of manners by the Gospel will confer benefits not unworthy of being compared with those which we experience from the reform which it has already, to a great extent, effected in morals.

T.

\* Adam Smith commended frugality, and deemed luxury an evil.

## VERNAL COUNSELS.

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OPEN your bosoms, youngling's, for the flowers  
 Which fill the soft lap of the merry May ;  
 Yours is the plunder of her meads and bowers :  
 Open your ears, young men and maidens gay,  
 To the sweet hymns of Nature's holiday :  
 Open your eyes, ye, whom the world would blind,  
 To joyous sight, which round about display  
 The o'erflowing love of God's almighty mind :  
 But chief, all ye of man's frail breath and kind,  
 Open your *hearts*, and lift them up in praise,  
 To Him who whispereth in the vernal wind,  
 And teacheth the free bird his gladsome lays,  
 Making so over-dear the world He gave,  
 That He perforce *must* sadden it to save.

*Crediton.*

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## ON THE PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION.

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We are confidently assured by many Christians, that we ought always to follow the plain, literal sense of the Scriptures ;—that attention to the plain, literal sense of the words, is all that is required to enable the most unprepared reader to interpret every part of the Bible, as well as the most diligent and learned commentator that ever lived. It is a most preposterous notion,—so preposterous, that it would scarcely deserve a moment's attention, if it had not been advanced by some from whom more correct views might have been reasonably expected. But this strange assertion is made in quarters which must give it weight with thousands. It is made in one of our modern Encyclopedias in a treatise understood to have been written by one of the most eloquent and popular divines of the present age. The interpretation of the Bible,

we are assured, is a simple affair of Grammar,—nothing more is necessary than a Grammar, and a Lexicon, or a Dictionary, that we may learn the common meaning of the words. It is an assertion calculated only to foster ignorance, error, and presumptuous dogmatism. It is inconsistent with the very nature of all language. You could not, and you do not, understand a daily newspaper by this means alone. It is not the common and literal sense of the words alone which is sufficient; but in fact you have some previous knowledge of the subjects discussed; you probably have some knowledge even of the particular sentiments of the writer whose words you are reading; you know the general nature of the objects which he has in view. You have a familiar acquaintance with the sense which particular words and phrases acquire in certain peculiar connections; you are familiar with the general style of thought and feeling which belongs to the age. All this knowledge you have,—you cannot but have it,—it has grown upon you insensibly,—in regard to all modern writers upon common subjects;—and this it is, not your bare knowledge of the literal sense of the words, which enables you to understand modern writing with so much facility. But in regard to the Scriptures, written thousands of years since, by and to a people whose ordinary feelings and habits were so different from our own,—this kind of knowledge needs to be cultivated; it will not grow upon us insensibly; it must be sought after, and carefully applied to the interpretation of the Bible. It is surely a strange doctrine, therefore that the literal sense of the words, which a Dictionary and a Grammar may teach, is all that is required.

Let us fairly try this principle by an example. I find our Saviour uttering these words,—“ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and wife, and children, he cannot be my disciple.” Now we know the literal meaning of all these words. We know that father, and mother, and wife, and children, mean those who stand to us in the nearest and dearest natural connections,—those who have loved and cherished us, and whom we are naturally bound to love and cherish in return. We know the meaning of the word *hate*; we know that it means the very contrary of loving and cherishing, even to loathe and

abhor. Here, then, am I to follow implicitly my Dictionary and my Grammar? Suppose any man to answer me in this way :—No; you must not here abide by the strict, literal sense of the words—because that would make Christ the teacher of a most monstrous and wicked doctrine, a violation of all our purest natural affections: therefore this cannot be the meaning. Very well,—I would answer, —I grant the full justice of this argument; but then remember, that in making use of such an argument you adopt an entirely new principle from an adherence to the literal sense of the words. You take for granted that we are to be guided in our interpretation of any obscure or difficult passage by our natural feelings of what is right and good. We are not, out of a mere blind, slavish attachment to the literal sense of words, to admit a meaning in the Scriptures contrary to the holy interests of virtue. A very good principle indeed; let it never be forgotten.

But perhaps my objector will give me a different answer, or he will give me another answer in addition to this. He may say that it is evident from other parts of the Scriptures themselves, and it has been fully proved by the most competent inquirers, that the ancient Jews had a peculiar idiom of speech, by which they used the word which in their language corresponds to our word *hate*, in a very limited and qualified sense, so as to mean nothing more than that one person or object is to be, in certain cases, preferred before another. As for instance, where God is represented in the Scriptures as saying,—“ Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,”—the meaning is, not that God literally hated Esau and his descendants, but only that, for his own wise purposes, he preferred the younger brother Jacob, before the elder brother Esau, as the immediate progenitor and founder of his chosen people the Israelites. In the same way, our Saviour must be understood to mean only that in certain circumstances, and for certain ends, his disciples must be ready to prefer their attachment to him, to the interests and requirements of his Gospel, even above their attachment to earthly parents and friends. Very well ; again I admit thefull force of this argument; but then I must remind the objector that in adopting such an argument, he gives his sanction to

another distinct principle of Scriptural interpretation. He assumes that besides the literal sense of the words, nay, sometimes almost in apparent opposition to the literal sense of the words, we are to be guided by our knowledge of some singular and peculiar idioms of speech familiar to the ancient Jews, which we can only learn from a diligent study of the Scriptures, and other writings. A very good principle again ; let it never be forgotten.

But returning for a moment to the first consideration. Suppose I were to allege, in reference to the argument that a literal interpretation of our Saviour's words would be a violation of our natural sense of right, of all our purest natural affections,—suppose I were to allege, that this is no answer ; this is no conclusive reason why this should not be taken as the real, intended meaning. It is indeed, very monstrous and very wicked ;—but many monstrous and wicked things have been uttered by men ;—perhaps this may be one of them. What answer shall I receive to this. The objector will immediately refer me to the known, acknowledged character of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom these words were spoken. I shall be told, he could have had no such meaning ; because he was a most holy and gracious person, one who by his whole teaching and example strongly inculcated all kind and amiable dispositions. He displayed the tenderest attachment to all his own friends, and as he hung dying upon the cross commended his own mother to the care of his beloved disciple. Therefore he could not mean to teach such an abominably unnatural doctrine. Very true ; with all my heart do I admit the full justice of *this* argument. But observe that here is another distinct principle of interpretation brought into use. It appears now, that we are not only to consult our natural feeling of what is right and good—we are not only to make ourselves acquainted with the peculiar customs and modes of speech amongst the Jews, to whom the instructions of Scripture were originally addressed,—but we are to be guided in the interpretation of particular passages, by our knowledge of the general sentiments and character of the individual by whom it was written or spoken. We are not, under any circumstances, to make Christ or his apostles appear to teach in any one place, a sentiment which we know to be at variance with their gene-

ral instructions, and with their own general character and conduct, as these are to be gathered from the Scriptures. A very excellent principle of interpretation undoubtedly;—let this also be kept in mind. It is a principle which, if carried out to all its legitimate consequences, will reach further than all Christians, I fear, will be inclined to follow its guidance.

But yet even here, even in this appeal to the known, general sentiments of the writer or speaker, there is in fact involved another distinct principle of Scriptural interpretation, which we must not allow to be overlooked. It is assumed in this argument, that all the doctrines and precepts of revealed religion must be perfectly consistent with one another. It is assumed that there can be nothing contradictory, nothing which to the human mind shall appear contradictory, in the teachings of divine revelation,—otherwise this method of evading the literal meaning of our Saviour's words is entirely fallacious. I might otherwise reply.—“Yes, it is true that the literal sense of these words is apparently inconsistent with the general teaching and example of Christ,—but perhaps that is no reason at all, why the literal meaning should not be received. Perhaps this is the peculiar character of revealed religion, to contain instructions which may seem to the feeble powers of human comprehension to be inconsistent, one part with another. The person with whom I suppose myself for a moment to be arguing on this subject, must assume and admit that it is not so,—otherwise he cannot fully support his own rational interpretation of these words. Here, then, I say, is another distinct principle of Scriptural interpretation. It is granted that we must employ our reason, we must make use of our own understandings, in order to judge of the consistency of the sense that we put upon one part of Scripture, with the sense we put upon the other parts of Scripture. We must so interpret all parts of the Bible as to make its interpretations harmonise. A very admirable and most important rule it is. Let this also be carefully remarked.

We see, then, that even in the just interpretation of this single passage, there are no less than four distinct principles of interpretation which it may be necessary to apply; independent of the principle that we should attend to the

common, literal meaning, and the plain, grammatical construction, of the words. It seems that we ought to be guided by our own natural moral and social affections,—by our acquired knowledge of peculiar idioms of speech employed by the ancient Jews and others,—by our knowledge of the general sentiments and character of the individual author of the passage,—and finally by the judgment of our reason, concerning the agreement of the sense which we ascribe to one portion of Scripture with the sense that we ascribe to other portions. Now, these, in fact, are the principles of Scriptural interpretation which have been established, on general grounds, by the most able and impartial men of all religious denominations. We clearly perceive that they are principles which have their foundation in common sense, and right human feelings. We see how spontaneously men have recourse to these principles, for the removal of any difficulty or obscurity in a particular passage of Scripture, whenever the prejudices arising from their systematic creeds do not interfere. And these principles are sufficient for the removal of almost every difficulty.

CHRISTIANUS.

## THE TRINITY.

In the opinion of Plato, the Divine nature, or in other words the GODHEAD was *threefold*. First, the original divinity, the *autotheos* or self-existent God—secondly the *λόγος* or *word* “ by whom all things were made” and thirdly the *ψυχη* or *spirit*. Such was the theology taught by Plato at Athens, above 400 years before Paul appeared in the same place to teach Christianity.

Now Paul was a judicious orator. He was willing to “ please all men in all things”; where he had a fair opportunity, where he could do it without any compromise of principle, he was ready to flatter the self-esteem of his audience. He was ready to intimate to the Athenians, that they themselves had had sufficient wisdom to erect an altar “to the unknown God,” to that very God whom he was about to declare to them.

How came he, then, not to say a single word about the

Trinity? What an opportunity to conciliate and captivate his audience! "That Trinity," he might have said, "which your almost inspired philosopher Plato taught in this very place 400 years ago, that very Trinity I am now come more fully to explain and declare to you." "I Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," the second person in that Trinity, and "filled with the holy spirit," the third person in that Trinity, "stand here before you."—Can we believe that, if a Trinity had ever entered Paul's head, he would have been silent upon it at Athens?—Would it not at least have been incumbent upon him to point out wherein the *true* Trinity differed from the very near guess at it which Plato had made 400 years before? And, in fine, if the doctrine of the Trinity is true, would it not have been fair and liberal, and consistent with Paul's invariable candour, to have given Plato and the Athenians credit for the very near approach which their unassisted reason had made to the truth?

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"*A Calm Remonstrance, Addressed to the Committee of the Infant School on their late Exclusive Resolution; by the Congregation of Unitarian Christians assembling in the Old Meeting, Ilminster. Drawn up by their Minister EDWARD WHITFIELD, and published at their request. "Strike but hear!" Sold by R. Eames, Ilminster; and in London by C. Fox, Paternoster Row. 1836.*"

The good people of Ilminster resolved to establish an Infant School in their town; and although the design appears to have originated with members of the Established Church, they very naturally applied for pecuniary assistance to their "Dissenting brethren of all Denominations." But though they were willing enough to take the money of their "Dissenting brethren," it was soon perceived that they felt no brotherly confidence towards them; for they determined, that "in order to avoid diversity of opinion," the management of the School should be "exclusively confided to members of the Established Church." This obliged Mr. Whitfield, who as a Dissenting and Unitarian minister had before taken a cordial interest in the undertaking, to

withdraw his name, and to protest against such a narrow, sectarian mode of proceeding. He has also taken judicious advantage of the circumstances, to publish this "calm" but spirited "remonstrance," in which he has ably defended the general principles of religious liberty, and of Unitarian Christianity. The pamphlet is adapted to make an excellent impression.

"When I state that the Church of England is of human origin, I lay down a proposition which the history of its rise and the source of its authority demonstrate; and Paley himself can find no firmer basis than this on which to plant his arguments in behalf of its value and utility. "A religious establishment," he observes, "is no part of Christianity, it is only the means of inculcating it :" as such its authority is in exact proportion to its identity with the Church of Christ, and wherever it departs from the spirit or the discipline of this universal and heavenly church, it offers but slight pretensions to superior authority. I would not, willingly, be unjust to the Establishment of this country: enrolled among its members are many names dear to literature, to virtue, and to religion; and it would not be easy to estimate the amount of good it has produced, both by precept and example, upon society. Justice demands from me this acknowledgment, but justice also requires me to express my deep and sorrowful conviction that the benefits, to which I have alluded, might have been more general and valuable. It does not come within my design to lay open some of the causes which have diminished its success and triumph; but I shall charge against it, that it cherishes an exclusive spirit, and thus counteracts the tendencies of the very religion it is designed to support.

"This Church is armed with all the power of the state, and it fences its doctrines with a denunciation of the most fearful and impious nature. Hence the members of it acquire, almost insensibly, an excessive regard and veneration for it, and are apt to attach ideas of inferiority to all who do not belong to its communion. This, then, is the pernicious consequence of religious establishments. They raise distinctions where reason and revelation acknowledge none. They take away rights and privileges from one portion of the disciples of Christ and bestow them upon another portion, unjustly exalting these, as unjustly depressing those, violating religious freedom, and breaking asunder the bonds of Christian charity and affection. And they produce a strong disinclination in the minds of such as are favoured by them, to a friendly and cordial co-operation with others, as we have recently had occasion to observe and to lament."

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## SIXTH MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

The "British Association for the advancement of Science," as most of our readers must be aware, has been in existence about six years. Its objects are simply those which its title designates, to promote the advancement of natural science in all its branches, by free intercourse and discussion amongst the most eminent philosophers, in this and other countries. Its previous meetings have been held successively at York, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Dublin. The sixth meeting commenced at Bristol, on Monday the 22nd of August. The gentlemen of Bristol most distinguished for their attachment to scientific pursuits, and others who were zealous for the honour of their city, had been long making preparations for this meeting, with the assistance of one of the permanent secretaries. Their labours have been crowned with complete success; for it seems to be universally admitted, to the credit of the West of England, that this has been one of the most agreeable and profitable meetings of the Association. On Saturday, the 20th. the influx of strangers into Bristol was so great and continual, throughout the day, as even in so populous a town to attract general observation. On Monday morning, early, the Committee assembled in the Chapter Room of the Cathedral, which is one of the most perfect and beautiful specimens of Norman Architecture in the kingdom. It awakened reflection, almost emotion, in our minds, to behold a considerable number of the first philosophers of the age, meeting to diffuse the light of modern science, in this gorgeous room erected many hundred years since by the votaries of a fervent but dark and superstitious piety. At 11 o'clock, the various sections of the Association met, for receiving and discussing communications in their respective departments of science. They were thus distributed, and held their meetings in different parts of the city, where large and convenient rooms were to be found,—Mathematics, Chemistry, Geology, Zoology and Botany, Medicine, Statistics, and Mechanics. These sectional meetings continued their sittings from 11 till 3 or 4 o'clock each day, and there the general amateur of

philosophy, or the mere curious observer of these scenes of intellectual activity, was sure of seeing all the most remarkable men in every branch of science, contributing the results of their own recent labours, and submitting each other's views to the ordeal of free discussion. Indeed, the spirited debate which takes place at these meetings, on the most interesting questions in science, constitutes one of their greatest charms. The near collision of so many great minds, all full of the subjects to be discussed, brings forth stores of practical knowledge, the most powerful trains of theoretical reasoning, and even bright flashes of wit and eloquence, which afford the general audience instruction mingled with delight, to a degree which can scarcely be thought possible until it has been experienced. In this respect the Geologists are pre-eminent; which is partly owing to the interesting state of their science, partly to the accident of their having amongst them several men highly gifted as *speakers*, and partly to their habit of meeting each other frequently at the sittings of their society in London, where they are accustomed to free discussion.

We cannot, of course, undertake to give any regular and full account of the matters transacted in the various sections. We can only allude to a few of the most important occurrences which fell under our own observation, and state the general impressions which we received. But perhaps we ought to explain, that no small portion of our time was occupied in observing the appearance, speech, and manners of the remarkable men before us, rather than in attempting to follow them in their scientific reasonings; though frequently, we were much too deeply interested in the subject of their communications, to indulge in our favourite habit of observing their persons.

On Monday morning we attended the Physical section, where we were gratified with a sight of Professor Whewell, Sir David Brewster, Sir William Hamilton, Mr. Baily the Astronomer, Professors Forbes, Jerrard, Strevelly, Loyd, and others of inferior but great notoriety. In the adjoining room, appropriated to the section of Mechanics, were Davis Gilbert, Dr. Lardner, Mr. Babbage, Mr. Russell, Sir John Ross, &c. After some little hesitation in making our choice, we took our seat in the room of the Physical section, where

Mr. Whewell was in the chair. He is personally the most striking, as we suspect he is intellectually one of the most powerful men, amongst the philosophers who were here collected. The Professor is no pale, sickly looking student, but immediately gives you the idea of a man that might have been as great in action as in contemplation. He is of dark and somewhat coarse complexion, with large but not plain features ; indeed, though at first view you would never think of styling him handsome, yet he becomes so at times, especially when he smiles. His height is about 5 feet 10 inches, and he has a strong, square built, muscular frame. He is singularly quick and almost incessant in his bodily motions, shewing an excitable though not a diseased nervous temperament. His head might serve for a Jupiter, with the exception, perhaps, of being a little deficient in coronal elevation, not absolutely, but relatively to the other parts of the head. The space immediately over the eyes and nose, commonly termed the brows, where phrenologists would fix the seat of the observing faculties, exceeds, we think, in breadth and protuberance, any thing we remember to have seen in the head of any human being. When he speaks, his tones are loud, clear, and energetic ; but occasionally there is a little confusion in his utterance, arising entirely, as it seemed to us, from the flow of his thoughts being too rapid for words. The chief business of the section, whilst we were present, was to hear and discuss communications from Mr. Lubbock, and Professor Whewell; respecting the *tides*, particularly as connected with the rise and fall of the barometer. The subject was not too scientific for the comprehension of persons of ordinary intelligence, and therefore greatly interested the audience.

On Tuesday morning, we attended at the Geological section, which was much crowded, from a general expectation that something very good was to be heard. The discussion related to the Geological structure of the northern parts of Devonshire. It would seem that Mr. De la Beche had informed his brother Geologists, that he had there discovered fossil remains, especially such as commonly occur in coal beds, in situations inconsistent with some established principles of the science, concerning the relative position and succession of strata. This having created much surprise, Professor Sedgwick and Mr. Murchison

were induced to visit Devonshire, with a view to explore the phenomena; the result of their examination was a thorough conviction that Mr. De la Beche had been mistaken, and that the phenomena in question are in strict accordance with the settled principles of Geology. The business of the section this morning was to hear the evidence and arguments in support of this conviction. The facts were detailed by Mr. Murchison, who was followed by Professor Sedgwick, in one of the most effective and brilliant speeches which it was ever our good fortune to hear in any popular assembly. He first argued the particular question in dispute, giving, with the help of a drawing suspended before the audience, a clear and masterly account of the Geological features of the district stretching from Ilfracombe to the granite of Dartmoor; but this was interspersed with such continual flashes of wit, humour, and fancy, as without at all confusing the argument, kept his intelligent hearers in a state of the highest delight and admiration. He then, towards the close, entered into some profound general views respecting the different kinds of science, which he distinguished as sciences of observation, of experiment, and of demonstration; and at length burst forth into a most animated and eloquent vindication of his own favourite science. Regarded simply as a speech, to say nothing of the value of his observations in a scientific point of view, we have seldom or never heard anything superior to this address of Professor Sedgwick. He is indeed the pride and glory of the British Association. He is a tall and striking looking person, but evidently not in the enjoyment of robust health. His complexion is very sallow, and there is generally a languor about his countenance, which denotes over-excitement and exhaustion. His head is not altogether so fine as Professor Whewell's. His most remarkable features, perhaps, are his eyes; they are large and bright, but commonly quite concealed by the dropping of the eye-lids; so that occasionally, even whilst he is speaking, no eyes are visible, and his head appears like the head of a bust or statue; when suddenly the lids are raised, and two full, liquid rolling, and expressive orbs, shining with intelligence and good humour, are presented to your view. His flow of words is uninterruptedly free and rapid, without the

slightest hesitation, and his tones are natural and varied ; in which respects he is superior to Whewell, whom, nevertheless, we humbly conceive to have the greatest mind.

We might easily give other instances, almost equally gratifying, of the pleasure and instruction which we derived from attending the particular sections. In the department of Statistics, we several times listened to distinguished men, both English and Foreigners, on questions of population, price of provisions, education, and other matters of great political and social interest ;—amongst whom were Baron Dupin, Herr Von Raumer, Lord Nugent, Mr. Hallam the Historian, &c. &c. In the Chemical section, the venerable Dr. Dalton might be found, daily harranguing, in his simple and quaint manner, crowds of persons who seemed all, not excepting those eminent in the science, to listen to him as pupils to an authoritative tutor. But our space is too limited to allow us to mention any further particulars, and we must content ourselves with one or two remarks on the *general* meetings of the Association. The Theatre was open for this purpose on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings; and there was an ordinary on the grounds of the Horticultural Society every day at 4 o'clock. The scenes at the Theatre, to which ladies were admitted, by tickets awarded to the members of the Association, were of course very gay and splendid. The stage was occupied by the officers and committees, and the rest of the house crowded with intelligent spectators of both sexes. On Monday evening, Dr. Loyd of Dublin, the late President, resigned his office into the hands of the Marquis of Northampton, who had been hastily summoned to preside in the place of the Marquis of Lansdowne, unavoidably absent on account of the lamented death of his eldest son, the Earl of Kerry. The general report of the Committee was then read by Dr. Daubeny ; after which the chairmen of the sections gave a brief analysis of the transactions of the morning in their several departments. The same plan of proceeding was adopted on the following evenings, but with such omissions and alternations as were likely to suit the minds of so promiscuous an audience. On Saturday evening, the proceedings were very much of a formal and complimentary nature, which gave occasion for speeches from others besides

the philosophers, especially for a very neat and pleasing address from Thomas Moore, the poet. The Association then broke up its sixth anniversary meeting, all parties, highly satisfied with the week's intellectual and social enjoyment, and feeling persuaded that the true end of the Association, "the advancement of science," had been effectually promoted. The next meeting is appointed to be held at Liverpool. It is expected that Birmingham, Leeds, and Newcastle will then put in their respective claims to this honour; after which, as we were informed by some influential persons, it is by no means improbable that a meeting of the British Association may take place at Plymouth. We congratulate our friends in the West on such a prospect.

## WESTERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this Society was held in Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol, on Thursday, the 18th of August. The Sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. John Kenrick, of Manchester College, York, and it was acknowledged by all who heard it to be an exceedingly able and impressive discourse. The business of the Society was, after the service, transacted in the Chapel, the Rev. R. B. Aspland in the chair. The members and friends dined together at the Montague Tavern, when Dr. Blake of Taunton presided, and greatly increased the pleasure of the meeting, by the urbanity of his manners, and the gratification which his presence always gives to those who know the worth and amiability of his character. In the evening, a large congregation assembled in Lewin's Mead, and the chair being taken by Dr. Carpenter, a series of resolutions or sentiments were read, which called up several ministers, and other gentlemen present, to address the meeting. The speakers were the Rev. W. Turner of Newcastle, Rev. T. Madge of London, Rev. Michael Maurice, Rev. R. B. Aspland, Rev. J. Kenrick, Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Richard Taylor, Rev. Robert Aspland of Hackney, Rev. H. Acton of Exeter, &c. &c. It was an encouraging, animating day, and all felt that their hands and hearts were strengthened by such intercourse, for the good work to which they were attached in common.

### TO SUBSCRIBERS.

*The bankruptcy of our London publisher, of which the Editor was not aware till late in the month, and when he was on the point of leaving home for a fortnight, may occasion some irregularity in the delivery of the "GOSPEL ADVOCATE"; but any inconvenience arising from this cause shall, if the work proceed, be duly remedied.*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL IV.

## CONNECTION OF RELIGION WITH SCIENCE.

Nearly all knowledge, of whatever kind, is capable of being applied in some way to the moral and religious improvement of men, as well as to the advancement of their mere physical and social comforts. The scientific knowledge of the material universe, however, is especially possessed of these useful tendencies, because, whilst it makes us acquainted with the productions and operations of nature, on which our external welfare chiefly depends, it reveals to us the existence, perfections, and agency of God, the Intelligent Author of nature, whom it is our religious duty to love and obey. The knowledge of nature which is God's workmanship becomes, *when so applied*, a foundation for the knowledge of God himself, in some of the most sublime and interesting relations towards us, and towards all his creatures, in which he can possibly be contemplated. It leads directly to just and elevated conceptions of the Divine attributes, and may often serve to correct our mistaken ideas of God derived from other sources. These are truisms which no person of sound judgment will think of disputing.

But although there is a common acknowledgment, amongst intelligent people, of these moral and religious tendencies of scientific information, yet it is a subject on which we frequently meet with very extravagant notions,—and extravagant, too, in the most opposite ways. Some are alarmed at the rapid progress of scientific inquiries in general, or smitten with a religious horror of certain alleged discoveries;—which shews that they love their own opinions more than truth, since it is plainly impossible that any *real* addition to our knowledge of nature should prove inconsistent with any *correct* views, any *right* belief concerning God, which we may have learnt from other quarters. Some men, on the contrary, fall into the error of almost entirely confounding mere scientific knowledge with proper religious cultivation; representing them as

identical, only because the one may, *by a mind so disposed*, be applied to the increase of the other. With this extravagant estimate of the moral effects resulting from acquaintance with the works of God in nature, there is sometimes united a very prejudiced contempt for all other sources of moral light and influence, particularly for the Jewish and Christian dispensations. Our attention has been recently drawn to the subject by a remarkable instance of this, amounting almost to a case of *monomania*, in the author of the book referred to in the note below.\*

Before we offer objections, however, as we shall, to certain leading positions set forth in Dr. Fellowes's "Religion of the Universe," it is no more than justice, both to ourselves and him, to premise that we are far from regarding his book with unqualified disapprobation. We have read many parts of it with considerable pleasure and benefit. He appears to us, indeed, to be a singularly rash and illogical reasoner, even when he can be said to reason at all. He is furiously possessed by one idea, which hurries him on from fancy to assertion, from premises to conclusion, at a most wild and rapid pace. In vulgar phrase, he is mounted on his *hobby*, which has fairly run away with him. He is assuredly a rhapsodist; though we are not unwilling to allow that he is an amiable rhapsodist. We give him credit for perfect sincerity, for a large share of true enlightenment of mind, and for a spirit of ardent benevolence. The general moral tone of his work is sound, pure, and elevated. We cordially sympathize with him in his condemnation of the dull formalities, and the false, conceited, mischievous dogmas, which are now too generally substituted for the simple principles and practices of true religion.

Nevertheless we cannot but think that the leading, the peculiar doctrine, of this work on the "Religion of the Universe, is a most extravagant notion, altogether unworthy of the ingenious and eloquent declamation bestowed upon it in these pages. That doctrine is,—that all true reli-

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\* "The Religion of the Universe; with consolatory views of a future state; and suggestions on the most beneficial topics of theological instruction. By Robert Fellowes, LL.D."

gion consists in the knowledge of the wise, powerful, and beneficent agency of God, discoverable in the works of creation, and revealed especially by the natural *sciences*. The expounder of this system continually pours scorn upon all other supposed means of religious illumination than the *sciences*. He maintains that it is the *knowledge* of God; as we may learn this from his *works* alone, which constitutes true religion. It is true, as might have been expected, that a notion of this kind is not pursued through a volume of more than two hundred pages, without some occasional inconsistent expressions, betraying now and then a sort of stifled consciousness of the necessity of something more than *scientific knowledge*, to render man truly religious. But still we confidently appeal to every candid reader of the book, whether this be not the plain, the all-engrossing, and only peculiar doctrine, supported in these pages. It is repeated in almost every paragraph, and in the most unqualified language. We are told again and again, that "religion and science are identical,"—that "religion consists in knowing God, and God is to be known only in his works,"— that "worship consists in exploring the perfections of the Eternal, as they are revealed in the works of the material world."

We seriously object to these propositions, not as being, by any means, entirely devoid of all truth, but as conveying extravagant, one-sided, imperfect, distorted views of the truth. We object that religion and science are not identical, however capable they may be of being intimately connected; for science is simply the knowledge of nature,—whereas religion, even natural religion, is the right moral application of that knowledge, to the government of our thoughts, feelings, and conduct, with respect to God. All human experience proves, if it proves any thing, that these are perfectly distinct acquisitions. The one may and often does exist in the characters of individuals, in a degree not at all proportionate to the other. We often see in men much science with little or no religion; and on the other hand, much religion with little or no science. We mean now, (for it is essential to our argument that we should mean,) such religion as even the fastidious author of this book himself would not disapprove,—the sincere veneration and love of God, influencing the practical

conduct of life, apart from all zeal for mere speculative dogmas. In the actual characters of men there is no just or constant proportion discoverable, between the degree in which they manifest these pure religious dispositions, and the degree of scientific knowledge which they have attained. It is plainly not absurd, therefore, it is not unreasonable or unnecessary, that there should be some provision made, both in human institutions and in the dispensations of God, for advancing the religious improvement of men, without leaving it to be *wholly* dependent on their cultivation of the sciences. And this is all which is required as an answer to this leading fallacy of the system we are noticing ; for to such general declamation as the author generally deals in, a simple exhibition of its rashness and hollowness must be accounted a sufficient reply. In the censure which he passes on the gloomy and presumptuous dogmas, the sanctimonious pretensions, the dull, senseless formalities, which are now so widely honoured with the name of religion, we agree with him most cordially. But we have his own admission, that these things are the abuses and corruptions, not the genuine fruits, of that very religion on which they are professedly founded. "Even," says Dr. Fellowes himself, "the mild and gentle, the humble and love-breathing religion of Him, the great Reformer of Nazareth, has been perverted to purposes as opposite to those which the benevolent Author designed, as the sword is to the plough-share, or darkness to light." By the way, it perplexes us much to know how Dr. Fellowes can possibly reconcile this admission, respecting the superior teaching and influence of Christ as a religious reformer, with his own favorite notion, that "religion and science are identical." Does he know of any proof, that Christ and his Apostles were eminently scientific ? possessed of a philosophical acquaintance with the material works of God, greatly superior to all other men of their age and country ? We have been accustomed to think that the New Testament itself contains abundant evidence of the contrary. Its natural philosophy, (as far as it can be said to have any,) is the vulgar, erroneous philosophy of the Jews at that period ; whilst its religion, as Dr. Fellowes admits, is pure and beautiful. Surely this ought to have given him a suspicion that religion and science are *not* identical.

They are, in fact, mainly addressed to very distinct faculties of the human mind ;—science to the strictly intellectual powers, religion chiefly, though not exclusively, to the moral and spiritual capacities of the soul. We are not so blind to truth, as to deny that science may, in various ways, be made to serve the best interests of religion. But that they are in any sense identical, or that there may not exist much of the one with little or none of the other, is so contrary to the views we entertain of the real philosophy of religion, and would lead moreover to such gloomy conclusions, concerning the utter vanity of nearly all the religion which has ever been experienced by men.—that we cannot embrace this doctrine, without some better evidence than is to be found in Dr. Fellowes's declamatory pages.

We object also that religion does not principally “*consist in the knowledge of God,*”—whether derived from scientific discoveries, or from any other source. There must, indeed, be some true knowledge of God, as the foundation of religious sentiment and obedience; but the knowledge required for these purposes is very simple; and it needs to be correct rather than extensive. The evil has usually been, and still is, that in religion men have arrogantly desired and professed to *know* too much, whilst they have revered, loved, and obeyed too little. Religion principally consists in the veneration, love, and moral service of God. And that these sentiments and habits may be entirely wanting, where there exists a vast deal of scientific knowledge, as well as of that kind of knowledge which is more commonly styled religious, we should have supposed to be one of the most palpable facts in human history. The truth is, that this tendency of an enlarged scientific acquaintance with the works of God to promote the interests of piety, is seldom perceived at all except by persons who are already, from the influence of other causes, virtuously and piously disposed. It is discerned only by the morally wise; it is acknowledged and felt only by the good and the devout. It is only by men of serious and reflecting minds, by men of pious hearts, that this concentration of the influences of all scientific knowledge towards spiritual enlightenment is commonly experienced. If Newton was eminently religious, Laplace

was an atheist. The English philosopher, however, was not pious because religion and science are identical ; nor was the French philosopher atheistical because science is hostile to religion. The former conclusion may be drawn by such hasty reasoners as Dr. Fellowes ; the latter may be adopted by ignorant fanatics. But the truth surely is, that these two renowned cultivators of science were such contrasts in religion, because, whilst science is not identical with religion, it yet may be converted to religious uses by a mind otherwise piously disposed. If this be so, however, we again submit in opposition to the leading doctrine of the publication before us, that there is nothing absurd in the supposition that religion may require to be promoted, both by human institutions and by divine dispensations, separately from the progress of scientific knowledge.

We object likewise to the positive assertion, that "God can be known only from his works," meaning, as this author clearly does, the material and visible works of God in creation. It must be allowed, that this is at once begging some of the most important questions that have ever been agitated amongst thinking men ; for there is no argument in this work to prove the falsehood of the Jewish and Christian revelations. The author vehemently insists, in favour of his own system, that God can be known only by *facts*, and from his *works*. Now, if the events, the providential and miraculous events, recorded in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, never occurred, it is plain that the religion founded upon them has no claims to our belief considered as a divine revelation. On the other hand, if these events did truly occur, then surely they are *facts*, they are *works* of God, and we may learn from them what are the attributes and the purposes of God, as well as from the visible creation. The question still remains to be determined, therefore, whether the Scripture history be true or false ;—a question which is not to be stifled, by mere scornful allusion to the supposed absurdity of all miracles. In much which Dr. Fellowes has said, respecting the inutility and mischief of numerous religious dogmas, we entirely concur. But it is our settled persuasion that Christianity does not teach religion in any such way :—it teaches religion through the medium of historical *facts*, providential *events*, and simple, rational, universal *principles*.

In conclusion, we cannot refrain from expressing our sorrow that such a work as this should have been published at this time. We do not affect to have been shocked or offended by any thing we have met with in these pages ; for we have long since learnt not to take offence at the speculative opinions of any man, where the sincerity and the sound moral spirit of him who entertains the opinion are, as in this case, clearly manifest. But we regret that such a speculation should have been published. It is calculated, we fear, only to strengthen the unhappy prejudices of many religious people against the application of reason and philosophy to sacred subjects. The "Religion of the Universe," is a work that contains many liberal and enlightened views, which might have done much good, if they had not been associated with the extravagant fancies which we have here attempted to expose. It is most devoutly to be wished, that there should be a perfect reconciliation established between religion and scientific knowledge. There is nothing more adapted to correct the narrow superstitions, and dogmatical notions, which are the disgrace of religion in the present age, than to pour into the minds of men, professing religion, the sublime and glorious discoveries of modern science. But so desirable an object is not likely to be accomplished by such illogical rhapsodies as this of Dr. Fellowes.

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## TAHEITIAN DEBATES ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.

(From *Messrs. Bennet's and Tyerman's Journal.*)

The reception of Christianity by one of the principal groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean, while it presents a most splendid and encouraging triumph of Christian philanthropy, has been also one of the most interesting events of our day in several other points of view. It has afforded an opportunity of observing the vast influence which religion is capable of exerting over the whole condition of a people, and in this way places the practical importance of religious truth in the most striking light. Although by many it will be judged that the form of religious doctrine inculcated on these islanders was by no means the most correct or the most happy, still the renovating power of

the Gospel, even in this form, has been so conspicuously displayed as to convince, one should think, even the most sceptical of its inestimable value, if not of its divine original. In the present instance we see it in the course of a very few years completely new creating the institutions, manners, habits and feelings of a people ; things, which in the ordinary course of human events, are justly deemed the most slow and difficult of change.

Although the Missionaries of the London Missionary Society had been stationed at Taheiti since the year 1797, it was not till the year 1814, that they were allowed to reap any considerable fruit of their labors. Up to this time, whatever partial and superficial accounts may have been before the public, the inhabitants of these beautiful and highly favored islands, appear to have been really in a very miserable state. Slaves to the terrors of a cruel and appalling superstition, wielded by an artful, rapacious, and bloody priesthood, who, in fact, had every man's life and property at their mercy, they poured out, in numerous human sacrifices, the blood which reeked on their altars. The horrors of their savage wars were unceasing. Unbridled profligacy had introduced a ruthless infanticide to an awful extent. Among many other similar instances, a mother confessed that out of seventeen children which she had borne, only one had been by its unpitying parents permitted to live. The tenderest ties of natural affection were outraged by the customary atrocity of burying alive, or otherwise murdering in cold blood, their aged or sickly kindred. But space would fail, were I to attempt to detail more particularly, the facts of which the repeated testimonies of the respectable and devoted men who have engaged in these missions have assured us. Suffice it to say that intoxication and disease, superadded through European intercourse to the pre-existing evils above enumerated, were rapidly reducing the population of these islands and almost threatening its total extinction, at the time when the influence of the Gospel, at length, by the blessing of Providence, prevailed, and rescued them from impending fate.

It was in 1814 that the king of Taheiti, by name Pomare, began seriously to doubt the truth of his national superstition. He took an odd way certainly to resolve these doubts, but it was direct and effectual. It had been

customary for the people when they caught a turtle to present it to the king, but it was not considered lawful for him to make use of it till it had been taken to the temple and there baked : a part of it was then offered in sacrifice, and the king and his family ate the rest. The priests had taught the multitude that if this order were violated the vengeance of the gods would follow. Pomare determined to put this to the test of experiment, and on the first occasion that offered commanded the turtle to be dressed at home, without sending any portion to the priests. He ate it alone : not a soul of his family beside dare taste it. All were expecting the threatened judgments, but none came, and the king was convinced of the impotence of his gods. He did not however attempt to coerce the people to the same conviction, yet it shortly spread among the chiefs, and in no long time the idols in great numbers were committed to the flames.

Do we smile at this proceeding ? Let us rather be assured that to cast off the superstitions of one's birth, one's kindred, and one's nation, is no small effort in any human mind, and it is greatest in the man who is otherwise savage and untutored ;—such a man is great in every clime,

Quem nec fama deum nec fulmina, nec minitanti  
Murmure compressit cœlum.

To be brief, the reader is probably aware from having read *Ellis's interesting Polynesian Researches*, or the *Journal* now before us, or from other sources, that a great change in the whole state of society in Taheiti and the neighbouring islands rapidly followed. Idolatry indeed made a dying struggle, and in 1815 Pomare had to fight for his throne, but victory, and the unwonted clemency which his new faith taught him towards the vanquished, confirmed the work which this noble reformer had begun. Christianity in consequence was almost universally adopted throughout the Society Isles, and the idols and all the vestiges of their worship zealously destroyed. The intelligent deputies, Messrs. Bennet and Tyerman, visited Taheiti in 1821, seven years from the commencement of the change. They found a Christian, and comparatively a civilized people : the sabbath strictly observed, Christian worship in large assemblies universal, all the open immoralities and cruelties that had prevailed discouraged, punished, and

nearly suppressed, the people happy and rejoicing in their emancipation from their late thraldom, blessing Britain for the benefits they had received, and anxious in every way both by personal service and contributious to communicate the same to their fellow-islanders throughout the Pacific. All this in seven years ! Probably history will be searched in vain for another such an instance, and we cannot but recognize in this the especial steps of divine Providence.

It is however proposed at present, to extract from the Journal of the worthy deputies a passage or two relating to one particular transaction, as affording a very interesting illustration of the present state of these now Christian, but still simple, Islanders.

The transaction alluded to was the meeting of a national assembly, or parliament of the islanders, for the purpose of adopting a new code of laws. The members of this assembly consisted of the royal family, the principal chiefs, and two chosen representatives from each district. A very orderly and grave debate continued throughout eight days, resulting in the adoption of a code well adapted to repress crime and immorality, and securing a due administration by a suitable provision of judges, juries, and other officers. The question which gave rise to most discussion was one regarding the infliction of capital punishment for murder, the only offence for which it was wished by some to retain it.

The alternative of banishment for life to a desolate island being proposed, " Hitoti, chief of Papeite stood up and bowing to the president and persons around him, said : No doubt this is a good law ; but a thought has been growing in my heart for several days, and when you have heard my little speech you will understand what it is. The laws of England, from which country we have received so much good of every kind, must they not be good ? And do not the laws of England punish murderers by death ? Now my thought is, that as England does so, it would be well for us to do so. That is my thought."

" Perfect silence followed ; and it may be observed here, that during the whole eight days' meetings of this Parliament, in no instance were two speakers on their legs at the same time ; there was not an angry word uttered against another ; nor did any assume the possession of more knowledge than the rest.

"After looking round to see whether any body were already up before him Utami the principal chief of Buanania rose, and thus addressed the president: 'The chief of Papeite has said well, that we have received a great many good things from the kind Christian people of England. Indeed what have we not received from Beretani(Britain)? Did they not send us the Gospel? But does not Hitoti's speech go too far? If we take the laws of England for our guide, then must we not punish with death those who break into a house?—those who write a wrong name?—those who steal a sheep? And will any man in Taheiti say that death should grow for these?—No, no; this goes too far; so I think we should stop. The law, as it is writen, I think is good: perhaps I am wrong; but that is my thought.'

"After a moment or two of stillness, Upuparu, a noble, intelligent and stately chief, stood forth. It was a pleasure to look upon his animated countenance and frank demeanour, without the smallest affectation either of superiority or condescension. 'My brother Hitoti,' he said, 'who proposed that we should punish murder with death because England does so, was wrong, as has been shown by Utami. For it is not the laws of England which are to guide us, though they are good;—the Bible is our guide. Now Mitti Truter (the Missionary Crook,) was preaching to us the other day from the Scripture, 'He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' and he told us that this was the reason of the law of England. My thought, therefore, is not with Utami, but with Hitoti, that we ought to punish with death every one found guilty of murder.'

"Next rose Pati, a chief and judge of Eimeo, and the first who at the hazard of his life had abjured idolatry, and burnt his idols. 'My breast,' he exclaimed, 'is full of thought and surprize, and delight. When I look round at this house of God in which we are assembled, and consider who we are that take counsel together here, it is to me all a thing of amazement and joy. Tati has settled the question, for is it not the gospel that is our guide? And who can find in that directions for putting to death. I know many passages which forbid, but I know not one which commands to kill. But then another thought is growing in my breast, and if you will hearken to my little speech, you shall know

what it is. Laws to punish those that commit crime, are good for us. But tell me, why do Christians punish? Is it because we are angry, and have pleasure in causing pain? Is it because we love revenge, as we did when we were heathens? None of these. Christians do not punish for these. Is it not that by the suffering we may prevent a man from repeating his crime and frighten others from doing as he has done to deserve the like? Well, then, does not every body know that it would be a greater punishment to be banished for ever from Taheiti to a desolate island, than just in a moment to be put to death? And could the banished man commit murder again there? And would not others be more frightened by such a sentence than by one to take away his life? So my thought is that Tati is right, and the law had best remain as it has been written.

"One of the Taati Rii, or little men, a commoner, or representative of a district, now presented himself, and was listened to with as much attention as the lordly personages who had preceded him. He said, 'as no one else stands up, I will make my little speech, because several pleasant thoughts have been growing in my breast, and I wish you to hear them. Perhaps every thing good and necessary has been said already by the chiefs; yet because we are not met to adopt this or that law because one great man or another recommends it, but as we the *taati rii*, just the same as the chiefs, are to throw all our thoughts together, that out of the whole heap the meeting may make those to stand upright which are best, whosoever they come,—this is my thought. All that Pati said was good: but he did not mention that one reason for punishing, (as a missionary told us when he was reading the law to us in private) is to make the offender good again if possible. Now if we kill a murderer, how can we make him better? But if he be sent to a desolate island, where he is all solitary, and compelled to think for himself, it may please God to make the bad things in his heart to die, and good things to grow there. But if we kill him, where will his soul go?'

"Others spoke to the same purport, and in the result it was unanimously determined that banishment, not death, should be inflicted on murderers." \*

F.

\* *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Revd. D. Tyerman and G. Bennet, Esqr., compiled by James Montgomery.* 2 vols. 8vo.

## MINIATURES OF NATURE.

—  
WAVING OF TREES.

The summer wave of leafy boughs—how fair  
 To sight, how soft in sound, how cool to sense !  
 Grace, melody, and freshness mingle there ;  
 Shedding, each one, as all, sweet influence  
 O'er the lull'd heart, that feels, scarce conscious  
 whence ;—

Akin to that which fills the eye and ear  
 From the green dance of Ocean, stretch'd immense  
 Out from the shelves, on which it *rushes* near,  
 To where it mixes with the bending sphere,  
 A haze of waters with a mist of sky.

In truth, I know not which to hold most dear—  
 If the first *now*, only because 'tis nigh :  
 Yet Fancy blends them ; and the whispering Tree  
 Communes with Voices from the distant Sea.

—  
TALKING BIRD,\* SINGING TREE, AND GOLDEN WATER.

Gold water, talking bird, and singing tree—

The marvels of the bold prince-errant's quest  
 In those wild Arab tales of witchery—

Marvels which us'd to swell my boyish breast,  
 As things to glimpse which were to be too blest,—  
 Are they not all around or near me now ?

Waters of streams, on which the sunbeams rest,  
 Are they not golden ? Doth not every bough  
 Sing a soft song when summer breezes blow ?

And the sweet birds, do they not talk ? I grieve  
 For him who thinks they do not. He can know

Few of the languages of the Morn and Eve,  
 In which, from hill to tree, from cloud to sod,  
 The Choristers of Nature praise their God.

\* See the Arabian Nights.

## ON LAY RELIGIOUS WRITERS.

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The cause of Religion and theologic science has at all times been supported by pious and learned Divines, who having professionally given most attention to it, have become best instructed in its mysteries, and most interested in its propagation.

But it has been said that these admirable Divines and preachers might have had their minds biassed, and their views inclined by the force of their ecclesiastical functions. Hence their authority and testimony in favour of Christianity have been frequently insulted and undervalued by men of corrupt and sceptical minds, and hence the peculiar value of those lay religious writers, who have espoused and supported the same cause, as independent and impartial truth-searchers. Such were Philo and Maimonides in the Jewish Church. Their testimony lies open to none of the suspicions of philosophers; and cannot be assailed by the sneers of profanity.

Many names of the lay religious writers of eminence are cited in such works as Simpson's Plea for Religion; Murray's Power of Religion on the Mind; and Macrie's Testimonies in favour of Christianity. And though Foster, in his celebrated essay "On the aversion of men of taste to what is called Evangelical Religion," has complained of their comparative paucity, yet enough can be found to satisfy the sincere inquirer, and to delight the warm-hearted philanthropist.

In confirmation of this statement we have only to cite such names as occur to us in the course of Church history, and general literature. And if the list we now borrow from memory be imperfect, the catalogue may easily be augmented by well informed readers.

Not to mention earlier names, in the course of the 6th and 7th centuries, our religion was confirmed by the testimony of the lay Church historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Evagrius.

In the 11th century we have Michael Psellus. This celebrated man, tutor to the Emperor's son at Constantinople, and the first philosopher of his age, wrote in a variety of branches—theological, legal, mathematical,

medical, and political, and his works have been highly valued.

A name that occurs to us in connection with the revival of oriental and general science in Italy, is John Picus Mirandola. This distinguished layman ably supported the cause of religion, and illustrated the Scriptures by his profound acquaintance with rabbinical and cabalistical learning, no less than classical literature, a taste for which had been revived by Dante and Petrarch.

Another layman who perhaps materially assisted in promoting the Reformation, was Cornelius Agrippa. He began to illustrate Scripture with a far more enlightened and varied style of exposition than his predecessors. And if he too enthusiastically sought to revive cabalistical and astrological science, yet by his attacks on the follies of the monks, and the pedantries of the schools, he effected great good.

John Angelus Werdenhagen was another illustrious layman of the same school. He sedulously endeavoured to blend the principles of Christianity with those of jurisprudence, and his writings are highly interesting.

A still greater man was Grotius, the illustrious defender of the Christian faith, and the first jurisconsult of his age.

The names of the succeeding lay religious writers are so familiar to the public that their simple citation is sufficient: such are Newton, Locke, Boyle, Clarendon, Selden, Pascal, Milton, Leigh, Polhil, Hale, Fludd, Rainsay, Felton, Addison, Wilberforce, Cowper, Bowdler, Montgomery, Taylor, Barbauld, Hannah More, Rowe, Wilson, and many more whom it would be superfluous to mention.

We have a strong hope and confidence that the influence of such writers will gradually raise up unnumbered emulators of their literary and social virtues. The seeds of their deep thought and refined sentiment will silently spring up and flourish, unhurt by the dark blights of prejudice or the wild storms of passion. And will not their fruits ripen in every nation and language, when the thick-sown tares of falsehood have perished from the earth?

Meantime, we cannot but join in the melancholy reflection of Foster respecting the state of what is called our popular literature. Many works of great literary merit that have attained extensive popularity, present an im-

mense vacancy of Christianised sentiment. It will be worth while the next time you open one of these works, to observe how far you may read without meeting an idea of such a nature as could not have been unless Christ had come into the world. Now, if the writers who have thus carefully preserved the whole world of interesting ideas which they have unfolded free from any evangelical inter-mixture, are really the chief instructors of persons of taste, and form, from early life, their habits of feeling and thought, it is easy to see that they must produce a state of mind very uncongenial with the gospel. We rejoice to anticipate the day, when all these tares of falsehood, their garbled errors, and their enticing sensualities, shall be viewed in their true light, and be destroyed from among men for evermore.

F. B.

### ON LITURGIES.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—Having noticed in your number for August an article recommending the use of Liturgical forms of Service in Unitarian places of Worship, and as in a very great measure I totally differ from the respected writer of that communication, I beg leave to make a few remarks on the subject.

And my reason for doing so is, that I perfectly agree with the opinions said, by the intelligent writer of the article in question, *to have been entertained by some gone-by Christians*: “That it is an indolent substitute for personal exertion, a mere mechanical contrivance for the discharge of religious duty—in short, a quenching of the spirit of real devotion.”

As regards any sinfulness being attached to the performance of a written Service, there can be none where it is conscientiously adopted;—but I would remark that, as to our Saviour joining in a Liturgy in a Jewish Synagogue,—it is no argument for its adoption at the present day;—inasmuch as we may by the same rule advocate burnt offerings, and the other forms and ceremonies of Jewish Worship; but he certainly condemned “long prayers and vain repetitions.”—Nor is it discoverable in any of the preachings or writings of the Apostles, that they were

favorable to Liturgies; on the contrary, their example certainly points us to free prayer as being highly beneficial.

How such frequent repetitions can be beneficial to religious improvement, I am at a loss to find out, as they must consequently fail in their effect, from not commanding the attention equal to free prayer;—and besides, there is something which gives it an appearance to the world of a wish to imitate Episcopalianism; particularly as the volume in question is chiefly derived from the Book of Common Prayer.

And how can Unitarians adopt a form from that Church, whose systems, whose government, ever since I have known what dissent meant, have been always condemned from the pulpit of that place of worship which has now, in the nineteenth century, found out the necessity of a liturgical form of prayer? The Church of England, or I should rather say those of its most staunch upholders, were not sparing in their opprobrium of the Unitarians, for what they call their blasphemous opinions, before; and they will now have, it may be expected, to add the charge of inconsistency; and in this they certainly have truth on their side.

I have omitted to notice, so early as I should have done, that I consider there is a wide distinction between forms of Prayer and Hymns; the latter have always been considered materially different from the supplications of the Minister, and in which it is necessary that some set forms should be regarded, to enable all to join in this part of worship; of course rhyme tends to make the music very far from difficult. Besides, from the Hymns used in chapels being generally very numerous, there is little chance, and no necessity, for undue repetition. It is strange that Unitarians should adopt such changes in these persecuting times, (I allude to the general opinions still entertained by all against Unitarianism,) when it seems to me to be the wisdom and duty of all to stand firm and unshaken, as well in our form of worship as in our doctrine. I am not aware, nor do I know that it bears much on the argument, but I would here enquire if any other dissenters than Unitarians have adopted a form prayer in their Chapels?

But what surprises me most is, the assertion that devotional composition is so much more difficult than any other. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh," and where there is sincerity the Almighty Father of all is satisfied; he requires no set forms of words in which to be addressed; therefore the sincerity of feeling which it is to be supposed is possessed by every one attempting to lead the devotions of a congregation, will seldom fail in this respect; and I am fully persuaded free prayer is the best mode for advancing the spiritual improvement and religious comfort of Christian worshipers.

As to the retaining on the mind any set forms which we have been in the habit of hearing, surely this can weigh but little in the case of most men. Who, with any religious education, however limited, can be at a loss to find words for a prayer as circumstances of life may require? The prayer that is most acceptable to God is not the most lengthy, or the most eloquent.

That a liturgical form of prayer is of any advantage on the ground of authority, is beyond my perception. What authorities have we to look to but those of the New Testament?

The writer in question advances also an opinion in favor of liturgies, that they will operate as a security for the performance of religious worship: but I think it of little use, with us, in this respect, as (however desirable in the Church of England, where ministers are sometimes appointed without regard to their talents) I conceive that Unitarians have no cause to fear on this head, inasmuch as each congregation has the choice of its Pastor, and should any fail from inability or any other cause to fulfil his duties, the evil can be soon remedied; and as regards a Liturgy being useful in case of the death or absence of a Minister, I believe it rarely happens that a chapel is without a Pastor, should its own be unable to attend.

After the proffered security which is given us by the aid of a Liturgy, we are told of its necessity to produce "Uniformity," and that Uniformity, "when not compulsory, but proceeding from rational and voluntary causes, is a pleasant idea and an advantageous reality."

Why, Sir, the very principles of dissent, are opposed altogether to such an opinion; the Roman Catholic church taught Uniformity, the Church of England teaches the same, and both even at the present day endeavour to support and raise their structures by means totally adverse

to those which a consistent dissenter from all such forms and ceremonies can think of attempting.

Your correspondent further remarks that Uniformity is desirable—as it allows descendants to pray in the same *language* as their forefathers—but it seems some, or I should say many, of the present day, are debarred the pleasure of praying in the same *manner* as their ancestors, and I am convinced, those worthies would never have allowed a Liturgy to be introduced in some places where it now is.

Believing as I do the opinions which Unitarians entertain are those and those alone which the Scriptures teach, I much wish for their advancement, but I fear the introduction of Liturgies will impede rather than forward our prospects. I fully concede the best intentions to those who have been the means of effecting so great a change in the form of worship at George's Meeting, but the friends of Unitarianism, if they wish to see it make any progress must be consistent in their religious proceedings as Dissenters, as well as firm in the maintenance of those particular opinions they adopt as Christians.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient Servant

A UNITARIAN.

#### LINES WRITTEN ON REVISITING DEVONSHIRE.

Land of the gentle stream and genial sky,

Dear native Devon! thee again I greet;

And as a loved and long lost friend I meet

Each hill and vale, where rests my kindling eye.

O land of mine—oh beauteous mother-earth—

A truant, but no ingrate, here I kneel,

Lab'ring in vain to utter all I feel,

While thus I kiss the soil that gave me birth.—

Long years have roll'd away since last I rov'd

O'er thy green hills, and through thy sunny glades—

Yet when afar I dwelt in other shades,

I ne'er forgot thy vales—the best, first lov'd.

Yes! in my lonely hours and silent dreams,  
 I have full oft revisited thy shores,  
 Trod thy soft vallies and thy heath-clad moors,  
 And wander'd pensive by thy murm'ring streams.  
 But 'tis not only that thy scenes are bright  
 And fair to look on ;— all that meets my view,  
 Each spot I tread on serves but to renew  
 Some infant dream, some vision of delight.  
 Here was the cradle of my earliest thought,  
 The fountain whence my youthful spirit drank  
 Love of all lovely things, and learn'd to thank  
 The Power that made me, for my life and lot.  
 Here first the ties that bind to earth, were wove ;—  
 In infancy beneath a mother's view,  
 I sported on this sod, where first I knew  
 The claims of filial and fraternal love.  
 And now, while sadly, fondly, I retrace  
 Those peaceful hours of innocence and joy,  
 I seem again to be a happy boy ;  
 I seem to live once more those halcyon days.—  
 Here dwell my kindred,—where their sires and mine  
 In peace dwelt also, in far distant years :  
 The same broad lands, the same old halls, are theirs,  
 The same their bower—the fig-tree and the vine.—  
 My fathers' graves are here !—Yon rustic tower  
 Tells where they lie—the worthy and the wise ;—  
 Perhaps even now their intellectual eyes  
 Rest at this silent, dim, and secret hour,  
 On me, who musing o'er their mould'ring clay,  
 Have come, a pilgrim-visitant, to weep  
 Within the lonely valley where they sleep,

Sighing that all things human pass away !  
Beautiful land ! land of my pride—my birth !  
Land of my fathers' graves, my kinsmen's home !  
Can I forget thee, wheresoe'er I roam,  
And what I owe to thee, my mother earth !—  
Since last I saw thee, years have roll'd away,  
And time has wrought sad changes, and no more  
I meet some well known faces, which before  
Were wont to brighten each returning day.  
I ponder o'er the page of my past years,  
And sighing, ask myself what there I find—  
Scarce can I read thee, while by tears made blind,  
Record of blighted hopes ! of cares and fears !  
Yet not with sad complaining would I dwell  
Longest on this dark page, nor thankless mourn  
O'er hopes and joys that shall no more return ;  
But learn to feel and humbly own, how well  
The Father whose best, dearest name is Love,  
Our lots disposes, and to each bestows  
A *mingled* portion, and thus makes our woes  
Sweet purchasers of all the bliss we prove.—  
Ties new and precious have been formed, since last  
I bade adieu, my native soil, to thee :  
New thoughts my soul has gain'd unceasingly,  
And if new woes, new joys has learn'd to taste.—  
Again I ope the record of my life, and see  
With gladness, many a sunny page that speaks  
Of rapturous moments, when the spirit seeks  
Fullness of bliss, and finds it readily.  
And here, oh here, sweet land ! within whose bound  
Those days were spent, which trouble never know,  
I feel, as soft and fresh thy breezes blow

From these dear native hills, as if the round  
 Of my whole life had been a sunny hour  
     Of pleasures pure and strong—of social joy ;  
     A course of useful, innocent employ,  
 Cheer'd by affection's smile, by love and beauty's power.  
 And while forgetful of the blotted line,  
     Which here and there arrests the wandering sight,  
 I turn to other lines that swim in light,  
 And own how large a sum of bliss is mine.—  
 Here then, with heart as fresh, and fond, and warm,  
     As in the days when life and hope were new,  
 I stand prepar'd my destiny to pursue,  
 To woo the balmy breeze, or brave the ruthless storm.  
 But like thy gentle streams, oh let my life  
     Glide calm and clear until the current fails,  
     And like thy laughing hills and peaceful vales,  
 My days be tranquil still, and free from strife.  
 Peace be with thee and me, my own fair land !  
     Till the dear hour when we again shall meet,  
     My eyes shall gaze on thee, and “ my due feet ”  
 On this blest soil delightedly shall stand.—  
 Now then, farewell !—To other scenes I go ;  
     Nor time nor change, nor absence, can impair  
     The debt I owe thee, and the love I bear.  
 Oh, wheresoe'er I roam, in weal or woe,  
 The memory of these hills—these quiet dells,  
     And the sweet friends who dwell here, shall impart  
     Comfort, and peace, and hope, to this fond heart :—  
 Once more, dear land, a thousand warm farewells !

*Birmingham.*

J. R. W.

## RIVAL LITERATURE OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

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In looking back into history, we find that the religious and political parties of our native country had for centuries to maintain a strife with those of the continent. This contest still continues, but a new one of more intense and thrilling interest has gradually arisen out of our relations to America. The early American settlers having seen and bitterly suffered from the religious contentions and persecutions exhibited in the mother country, seem to have entertained a hearty detestation of the system which had banished them from their own land; and they cherished the new recovered birthright of sacred and civil freedom, with a fondness of memory no less than of hope.

Hence, while at home our religious and political discussions went on with a keen and hostile collision, which enflamed the passions of the people; all our principal theological and political parties received a more general form of modification, as soon as they entered the atmosphere of the New World.

It was undoubtedly so with the early nonconformist settlers, and their successors in faith, the Whitfieldites. It was so with Penn and his immense numbers of proselytes. It was so with the early Unitarians and their American converts. In every instance religious opinion assumed a freer, and at the same time a milder character, on the other side of the Atlantic.

On this account our British writers, while they exerted their utmost powers, and struggled right gallantly against all the political influences hostile to intellectual culture, began to suspect that men of equal talents would arise on the American shore, who, from possessing greater freedom of thought, and abundant novelty of illustration, might more than rival us at home.

It has been argued that this would have been the case if America had preserved its allegiance to the royalty of England. If uniting all that was venerable and dignified in the history of her mother country, she had superadded the boundless stores of thought opened by her own discoveries, perhaps we should have found it difficult to compete with her intellectual achievements. The war with England, however, occurred, and gave a new colouring to all the

associations, ideas, and feeling of the Americans. If they lost in this vehement hostility a vast number of those deep and majestic sympathies connected with an immemorial monarchy, they gained no doubt something of that bold and daring originality, which has characterized the genius and the literature of republics. This will give a more intense and extensive character to the emulous struggle.

Such is the nature of the theologic and intellectual competition which is now opening between great Britain and America. The contest is only now begun which is destined to go on with increasing vigour and enlarging operation, through many future ages. It will probably exhibit in its course some of the finest productions in religion, philosophy, science, and art, that the rivalry of two such empires can possibly call into existence. The characteristics of this contest are visible in some measure in the American writers even now before the public. They may be observed in the works of Edwards, Brainerd, Channing, and Ware, in divinity : Webster, and Percival, in philosophy : Irvine, Willis, Bryant, Graham, Cooper, and several other distinguished names in literature and poetry.

M. H.

### QUESTIONS FOR THEOLOGIANS.

1. Suppose Jesus had been received as Messiah by the Jews, would the doctrine of the Trinity in that case have been known ?
2. If the death of the Saviour can solemnly be called a “Scheme”—how far could the agency employed be in unison with the wisdom, justice, and paternal character of the Deity ?
3. How far is “a Scheme” of Salvation, as being procured by Christ’s death, consistent with the “transgression” of the Jews, whose condemnation followed the crucifixion ?

*Wareham.*

X.

## ABSTRACT OF THE NEW MARRIAGE ACT.

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[We have been induced, by the unusual interest and importance attached to the New Marriage Act, to lay an Abstract of its leading provisions before our readers. We shall, in our next number, give a similar Abstract of the new law for the *Registration* of births, deaths, and marriages.—Ed.]

1. The Act comes into operation on the first of March, 1837. The rules for the solemnization of marriage prescribed by the Rubric, are still to be observed by the clergy of the Church of England;—only that where the publication of banns was formerly required, a marriage *may* now be solemnized in Churches on the production of the Registrar's certificate, as afterwards mentioned. The power of granting special licences by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his proper officers, to marry at any convenient time or place, is reserved.

2. The right of Quakers and Jews to marry in their own way, as at present enjoyed, is still reserved to them, provided they give notice to the Registrar, and obtain his certificate, as afterwards stated.

3. The superintendent Registrar of births and deaths in every parish or union, as appointed under the new registration act, shall likewise be the superintendent Registrar of marriages, and the Districts shall be the same.

4. In the case of every intended marriage, (except by licence or publication of banns, in which cases the old law remains unaltered,) whether according to the rites of the established Church, or by Jews or Quakers, or by any other class of Dissenters, in any way authorised by this act, one of the parties must give notice to the superintendent Registrar of the district in which the parties shall have resided for not less than seven days, stating the names, profession or condition of each of the parties, their place of abode, with the time they have dwelt there, and the Church, or other building, in which they intend to be married;—if the parties should dwell in different districts, notice must be given to each superintendent Registrar.

5. The superintendent Registrar shall file such notices at his office, and also copy them fairly into a book to be kept by him for that purpose, which book shall be open at

all reasonable times, without fee, to all persons desirous of inspecting it; but for every entry of notice, the Registrar shall be entitled to a fee of one shilling.

6. The Registrar shall transmit weekly, to the Clerk to the Guardians of any Poor Law Union, or any Parish, within his district, all notice of intended marriage, to be read by such Clerk at the weekly meetings of such Guardians, for three successive weeks; if the said Guardians should not meet weekly, it shall be sufficient that the notice be read at any meeting they may hold within 21 days of the time when the notice was received by the Registrar.

7. After the expiration of 21 days from the entry of the notice, the Registrar shall be bound, on application, to grant the parties a certificate in the form prescribed by the Act,—provided no lawful impediment be shown to the satisfaction of the Registrar, and provided the issue of the certificate shall not have been forbidden, in the manner afterwards prescribed, by any persons authorized to do so;—for this certificate the Registrar is entitled to a fee of one shilling.

8. Any person authorised in that behalf may forbid the issue of this certificate, by writing the word "*forbidden*" opposite to the entry of the notice in the book kept at the office of the Registrar, subscribing at the same time his or her name, place of abode, and character in respect to either of the parties, by reason of which he or she is authorised so to forbid the marriage;—this shall render the notice void, and prevent the issue of the certificate.

9. All persons whose consent to a marriage by licence is now required by law, shall be authorised to forbid the issue of the Registrar's certificate.

10. The superintendent Registrar shall have authority to grant *licences* for marriage in any building registered for that purpose within his district, or in his own office;—for every such licence he shall be entitled to the sum of £3. over and above the value of the stamps required; he shall four times a year make a return to the Registrar-General in London of every licence he has granted, stating the particulars concerning the parties;—he shall give security in the sum of £100 for the faithful execution of this part of his duty; this power of the Registrar to grant

licence does not apply to marriages intended to be solemnized according to the rights of the Church of England, as licences for such marriages must be obtained in the same way as at present.

11. The party applying for such licence shall appear personally before the Registrar, and, after delivering the certificate of lawful notice, shall make oath that he or she believeth there is no impediment of kindred, or other lawful hindrance to such marriage, that one of the parties has resided within the district for 15 days, that where the parties, not having before been married, shall be under age, the consent of those whose consent is at present required by law has been obtained. The licences and declarations are to bear the same stamp duties, as those now granted for marriages in Churches.

12. Any person, on payment of 5s., may enter a *caveat* with the superintendent Registrar against the granting of a certificate or licence for any marriage, signing his name, residence, and the ground of objection on which he enters the *caveat* ;—the Registrar shall then suspend the grant of his certificate or licence, until he has satisfied himself by inquiry that the marriage ought not to be obstructed, or until the *caveat* is withdrawn ;—in cases of doubt, the superintendent Registrar may refer to the Registrar General in London ;—or if the person entering the *caveat* be not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent Registrar, he may also appeal to the Registrar General, who shall straightway either grant or refuse the certificate or licence.

13. No marriage by these licences shall be solemnized until after the expiration of 7 days from the entry of the notice of marriage as before directed.

14. If the marriage be not solemnized within three Calendar months after the notice has been entered, then the notice, certificate, and licence, all become void, and the whole course of proceedings must be entirely renewed.

15. When the marriage is to take place, the certificate of the Registrar shall be delivered to the Officiating Minister, if the marriage be celebrated according to the Church of England ; or if amongst Quakers or Jews, then to the registering officer, or officers of synagogues ; and in all other cases, the certificate shall be delivered to

the Registrar appointed to be present at the marriage, as provided by the Act.

16. The superintendent Registrar of each district, with the approval of the Board of Guardians, and subject to such rules as the Registrar General shall declare to be necessary, may appoint persons to be Registrars for the purpose only of being present at marriages in all cases where such presence is required by the Act.

17. Any proprietor or trustee of any building or certified according to law as a place of religious worship, may apply to the superintendent Registrar to have the said building registered for solemnizing marriages; in making this application, he must present to the Registrar a certificate, signed in duplicate by twenty householders, that such building has been their usual place of worship for one year, and that they desire to have it registered for the solemnization of marriage;—the superintendent Registrar shall send these certificates to the Registrar General, who shall then register the building accordingly, and having indorsed both certificates with the date of the registry, shall keep one in his own office, and return the other to the Registrar of the district; the superintendent Registrar shall then give a certificate of the registry of such building, on parchment or vellum, to the proprietor or trustee making the application, and shall likewise give public notice of the registry of such building, in some Newspaper circulating within the County and in the *London Gazette*. The fee for all this is three pounds.

18. In case any building which has been thus registered for solemnization of marriage, shall be disused as a place of worship by the congregation in whose behalf it was originally registered, the registry shall be cancelled; but if the same congregation shall use some other building, the Registrar General may substitute the new place of worship instead of the old one, though the new place may not have been used for one year;—this substitution of one building for another, shall be certified and published by the superintendent Registrar in the manner appointed, in the case of original registry, and the same fee of £3 shall be paid.

19. The necessary time having expired after notice, and the necessary certificate being procured, marriage may be

solemnized in any building so registered, according to any form or ceremony which the parties may see fit to adopt ;—provided that it be with open doors, between the hours of 8 and 12 in the forenoon, in the presence of some Registrar of the district, and of two or more credible witnesses ;—provided also that each of the parties make these declarations.—“ I know not of any lawful impediment, why I, A. B. may not be joined in matrimony to C. D.” ;—and “ I call upon these persons here present to witness that I A. B. do take thee C. D. to be my lawful wedded wife, [or husband.] ”

20. Any persons who shall object to marry in any such registered building, may, after due notice and certificate as aforesaid, contract marriage at the office of the superintendent Registrar, in his presence, in the presence of some Registrar of the district, and of two witnesses, with open doors, within the hours aforesaid, making the declarations before stated. The Registrar present shall be entitled to the fee of 10s. in the case of marriage by licence ; otherwise, the fee of 5s.

21. The Registrar shall forthwith register every marriage solemnized in his presence in a book to be furnished him for that purpose by the Registrar General, according to the form prescribed by the new registration Act ; and every such registry shall be signed by the person by whom such marriage shall have been solemnized, if any, by the Registrar, by the parties married, and attested by two witnesses.

22. Four times a year, every Registrar shall deliver to the superintendent Registrar of his district a true copy of all the entries of marriage in his book since the last delivery ; and the superintendent Registrar shall examine and verify the same ; and when the Registrar's book is filled, it shall be delivered to the superintendent Registrar, and kept by him with the records of his office.

23. To relieve the inhabitants of populous parishes or districts from inconvenience, Bishops are empowered to authorise the solemnization of marriage, according to the rites of the established Church, in any *Chapel* licenced for divine worship according to the rites of the Church ; but only for persons residing within a district, the limits of which shall be specified in the Bishop's licence.

24. Several clauses of the Act then provide for the payment of the fees of marriage in these episcopal chapels, for the keeping of the registry, and other such matters which are of no particular interest to Dissenters.

25. The Registrar General shall in every year make out and cause to be printed, a list of all places of worship registered for marriage under the provisions of this Act, stating the county or district within which each building is situated, adding also the names and places of abode of the Registrars and superintendent Registrars in every district;—and a copy of such list shall be sent to every Registrar and superintendent Registrar.

26. The Registrar before whom any marriage is solemnized, may lawfully ask of the parties the particulars required to be registered touching such marriage.

27. Any person who shall enter a *caveat* against any marriage, (as stated in No. 12,) on grounds which the Registrar General shall declare to be frivolous, shall be liable for the costs of such proceedings, and for damages to be recovered in a special action by the party against whose marriage the *caveat* shall have been entered.

28. Every person who shall wilfully make any false notice, required by this Act, or any person who shall wilfully give a false representation of himself, in order to obstruct any marriage, shall suffer the penalties of perjury.

29. Every person who shall wilfully solemnize a marriage in any other place than that which is specified in the required notice and certificate, (except by special licence, or amongst Jews and Quakers,) or in the absence of the Registrar of the district, or before or after the expiration of the appointed time, shall be guilty of felony.

30. Every superintendent Registrar who shall wilfully violate the provisions of this Act, by issuing any licence or certificate, either before or after the expiration of the appointed time, or who shall wilfully register or solemnize any marriage herein declared to be null and void, shall be guilty of Felony;—but every prosecution under this Act, must be commenced within three years after the offence committed.

31. If any person shall wilfully intermarry, without complying with all the provisions of this Act, the marriage of such persons shall be null and void;—except that

nothing herein contained shall annul any marriage legally solemnized according to an Act passed in the 4th year of his late Majesty, George the Fourth, intituled,—“*An Act for amending the Laws respecting the solemnization of marriages in England.*”

32. If any valid marriage shall be had by means of any wilfully false notice or declaration, it shall be lawful for his Majesty’s Attorney, or Solicitor-General to sue for a forfeiture of all estate and interest in any property accruing to the offending party by such marriage: the proceedings and consequences being the same as in like cases under the old law.

33. This Act shall extend only to *England*, and shall not extend to the marriage of any of the Royal Family,

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“*A Popular View of the Progress of Philosophy among the Ancients: including the Early Barbaric Philosophy; the Ancient Jewish sects; and the Grecian Philosophic Schools of the Ionic Division. With Notes.* By JOSHUA TOULMIN SMITH, of Lincoln’s Inn, Esquire, Member of the London Phrenological Society, and Author of “*Introduction to the Latin Language*,” &c. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman. 1836.”

This is a little book that may be very useful; as it communicates, in a plain style, the most interesting facts concerning the lives and opinions of the ancient philosophers. It has no pretensions to deep learning, and, as may well be supposed, contains nothing more than is to be found in Brucker and Enfield;—but it is far more concise and popular in its method of treating the subjects discussed. The author has broached, occasionally, a few doubtful speculations of his own; but he is generally clear and correct, in stating the sentiments of the sages of old.

The following account of the Stoical notions respecting God, may be taken as a specimen:—

“God, according to the system of Zeno, is neither infinite, omnipotent, nor incorporeal. He is not infinite, for he is comprehended within this universe, beyond which all is vacuum. He is not omnipotent, for he himself is subject to a blind inevitable *Fate*. He is not

incorporeal, for nothing can be incorporeal. Zeno did not admit the fifth principle,—besides the four elements,—whence mind and the superior senses are derived, according to the Academics; for he asserted that *Fire* is itself that principle, and that thence mind and the senses are produced. He differed likewise from his predecessors, inasmuch as that *he could in no way conceive the possibility of anything being produced or effected by that which is incorporeal*, of which nature Xenocrates and the Academics taught the soul to be: but asserted, that *whatever produces, or is produced, must be substantial and corporeal*.

"Though, therefore, in the perusal of the writings of the Stoics, we shall sometimes meet with language expressing noble sentiments and exalted ideas in relation to the Deity, we must always bear in mind the true attributes which were ascribed to him according to the creed of this sect; and we must likewise remember, that, before the period in which those writers lived, the far more excellent and sublime truths of Christianity and revelation,—of which the most perfect and exalted heathen systems fall far short,—had been preached and diffused abroad; and much of their tone had, though unacknowledged, been incorporated upon the ancient Stoic system.

"The whole world was conceived by Zeno to be a combination of two eternally-existing principles,—one passive, and the other active:—this *active principle* is the only God of the Stoic system. He is merely the animating principle of the world, as the soul is the animating principle within man. The more immediate residence of this God of the Stoic system "was conceived to be the æther, or air, which is endowed with a mind, by which all things are directed;" and this æther is diffused in the shape of a subtle fire throughout the universe, animating, by its heat, all portions of creation.

"The actions of the God of the Stoics were controuled by an inevitable fate, with which he is unable to contend, and to which Zeno ascribed the introduction and the origin of Moral Evil. Much more willing should we ourselves be to allow the source of moral evil to be this, than to yield credence to the origin which has been ascribed to it by many; an origin, the idea of which is alike derogatory to the exalted view in which we regard the perfections of the Deity, and to the wisdom of that Moral Government which he employs in the regulation of the world.

"The reverence which the Stoics paid to the Deity, such as was their idea of that Being, was no other than that which they paid to themselves. A passage in the fifth book of the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, completely and correctly expresses the original idea of the sect upon this point:—"As you worship the best thing in nature, so are you to pay a proportionable reverence to the best thing in yourself. You will know it by its relation to the Deity. It is the reigning power within you."

"Zeno believed in the existence of many inferior deities. In fact, the soul of the world being diffused throughout all portions of the universe, each animated being partakes necessarily, in some degree, of the nature of divinity."

## YEOVIL TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR.—We beg to forward you a report of the proceedings which took place, at a recent Meeting of the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Society, held on Monday, August 29th last.—In doing this, we refer to the proceedings of a former Meeting, which, from reasons that will appear in the sequel, could not be reported, till they had been brought to a definitive close, by the transactions of this year.

We are, Sir,

Yours respectfully,

MARKES LAMBE.

THOMAS RALLS,

J. TOMPKINS.

Committee to arrange the Controversy.

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In August, 1835, a Meeting of the Trinitarian Bible Society, was held in Yeovil, the Rev. George Washington Philips, Honorary Secretary to the Parent Trinitarian Society delivered a speech, in which he described the Unitarians as Infidels.—At the conclusion of the proceedings, Mr. Jenkins, the Unitarian Minister, addressed the Meeting. He denied the charge, that Unitarians were Infidels; and challenged Mr. Philips and the Clergy to the proof. He declared himself ready to discuss the subject, in any manner they should propose.

Mr. Jenkius, accompanied by the Committee, waited on Mr. Philips and the Clergy, to ascertain their reply to his offer. A desultory discussion took place, which commenced with the Clergy putting questions, on the subject of Unitarianism, to which Mr. Jenkins replied. Mr. Philips then said to Mr. Jenkins, that he could not, owing to other engagements, meet him then; but promised to do so, on his next visit to Yeovil.

Mr. Jenkins received no reply from the other Clergymen, if we except a kind letter from the Vicar of Yeovil, in answer to a request made by Mr. Jenkins, that the Rev. Gentleman would inform him as to the steps about to be taken by the Clergy, in reference to the controversy. Mr. Philips declined any controversy on his part; but added that he spoke his own sentiments only.

On Monday, the 29th ult. another Meeting was held of the Trinitarian Bible Society, at which the Rev. G. W. Philips a *second* time denominated the Unitarians Infidels; although he had not, as yet, met the charge of misrepresentation, formerly brought against him for applying that epithet to Unitarians. Mr. Jenkins addressed a letter to Mr. Philips, in which he appealed to his justice and candour as to the propriety of his repeating an epithet which the Unitarians denied; and which denial Mr. Philips had not yet met. In a personal interview which Mr. Jenkins had with Mr. Philips, the latter gentleman said he could not meet Mr. Jenkins, as he was about to leave Yeovil immediately. The details of this conversation may, however, be found in the third of the Resolutions, to which we shall have occasion to refer.

In pursuance of a requisition from several persons connected with the Yeovil Unitarian Congregation, a Meeting was called, at which the following Resolutions were agreed to, and ordered to be published, in two of our Provincial Papers—the Sherborne Journal, and the Dorset Chronicle :—

**"Unitarians, and the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Meeting."**

"At a Meeting, specially convened, of the Unitarian Congregation, Yeovil, the following Resolutions, in reference to the allusions made to Unitarians at a Meeting of the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Society, held Aug. 29th, 1836, were unanimously adopted :

1.—"That this Meeting, holding sacred the right of individual judgment, while they differ from others in their religious views, have always endeavoured so to differ in a spirit of Charity ; and to merit well from their Bretheren of other religious denominations.

2.—"That this Meeting have therefore witnessed, with pain, the attempts made at late meetings of the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Society, to disparage them, as a religious body, in the sight of the world, by ascribing to them principles which they solemnly disavow, and by identifying their religious tenets with infidelity.

3.—"The Rev. George Washington Philips, Honorary Secretary to the Parent Trinitarian Bible Society, having at a Meeting of the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Society, held in Aug. 1835, described the Unitarians as Infidels, the Unitarian Minister in Yeovil challenged the Rev. Gentleman to the proof. Mr. Philips then declined the offer, on the ground of interference with other arrangements ; but promised, if possible, to meet the Unitarian Minister at the Trinitarian meeting of the following year, 1836. At the Meeting of August 29th, 1836, the Rev. Gentleman repeated the assertion, that Unitarian are Infidels, although he had not replied to the *solemn denial* of the charge previously made by the Unitarian Minister. On the latter gentleman again calling upon Mr. Philips for proof of the assertion which he had made, and appealing to his justice and candor, as to the propriety of repeating a charge which had been denied, and which denial Mr. Philips *had never met*, the Rev. Gentleman replied to the bearers of the letter—" If Mr. Jenkins is a Unitarian, he is an Infidel ; and he may consider me as an Idolater." Upon these grounds, this meeting come to the following resolution :—That they view with regret the line of conduct adopted by the Rev. George Washington Philips as calculated to produce any other than beneficial influences on the cause of truth ; and, in their opinion, detrimental to that spirit of charity which the Christian religion so powerfully inculcates ; that they conceive the conduct of the Rev. Gentleman, in denying to Unitarians an opportunity of exculpating themselves from the above charge, and in again repeating it, as unworthy of him as a public instructor ; as contrary to the rules of common courtesy ; and deficient in that respect which religious denominations, however widely differing in their opinions, ought to observe towards each other.

4.—"That the Rev. Clergy connected with the Yeovil Trinitarian Bible Society, by their refusal to allow Unitarians an opportunity of

exculpating themselves from the charge of Infidelity, and by repeating that charge, have placed themselves in the situation of those who, after giving offence, refuse to make the reparation which those who conceive themselves injured demand from them.

5.—“That this Meeting express their regret at the allusions made in the Meeting of Monday last, to the opinions of Roman Catholics, as ‘idolatrous Popery;’ and that they entertain the hope that the period is not far distant when such charges, irritating as they do the feelings, but not converting the erring, will be discontinued when truth will be tried by its proper tests alone.

6.—“That, in the above Resolutions, this Meeting by no means intended to implicate the Clergy of the Established Church generally; that, on the contrary, they recognise in that body, and in the Dissenting Ministry, very many who, by their enlightened zeal and liberality, have a claim on their sincere respect, as the promoters of that peace and charity which ‘shall never fail.’”

“Signed on behalf of the Meeting,

“MARKES LAMBE, Chairman.

“Dated Yeovil, August 30th, 1836.”

A vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. John Jenkins, for the energy which he had displayed in defending the energy of the Congregation. In the demonstrations of approval, made by those who heard him with marked attention for nearly an hour and a half, (and amongst them were many of other religious denominations,) Mr. Jenkins must have felt that he had the highest testimony (next to his own conscience) of the propriety of the line of conduct he had adopted.

We conclude our report with the expression of our conviction, that the above proceedings have done much for Unitarianism. In the condemnation of all uncharitableness which we have heard expressed, in reference to the above transactions, equally by Churchmen and Orthodox Dissenters, we see indications of advancement in respect for each other’s conscientious differences, and of the downfall of all that which is most hostile to the happiness of society—Bigotry.

Yeovil, September 15th, 1836.

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## SOMERSET AND DORSET UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

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The Half Yearly Meeting of the Somerset and Dorset Unitarian Association, will be held at Crewkerne, on Wednesday, Octr. 26th, when the Rev. J. MURCH (Bath) will preach in the Morning; and the Rev. P. Harwood (Bridport) in the evening.

JOHN JENKINS, M. A. Secretary,

Yeovil, September 16th, 1836.

## OBITUARY.

Died, September, 3rd. at *Havre* in France, the REV. ISRAEL WORSLEY, late of Lincoln, and formerly many years minister of the Unitarian Presbyterian congregation at Plymouth. Mr. Worsley was so long and so well known amongst us, especially in the West of England, that his death will be felt as the loss of an old friend and fellow labourer in the cause of divine truth. He will be acknowledged, by all who knew him, to have been a man of strong understanding, of inflexible integrity of principle, and of kind, generous feelings. His life, for a Dissenting minister, had been a somewhat checkered one. In his early days, he spent some years in France and the Netherlands, officiating as an English preacher, and was at one time a national prisoner. He had experienced many trials and afflictions. About the year 1830, Mr. Worsley left Plymouth and removed to Paris, where, in conjunction with his daughter, he established a school, and likewise opened a place of Unitarian worship. His fortunes, it is believed, were not prosperous there, and he returned to England and settled for the second time in Lincoln. He lately suffered several attacks of paralysis, and, partly in the hope of recruiting his strength, but chiefly for the gratification of his paternal affections, he repaired to *Havre*, where two of his daughters reside, one of them being married to a respectable American Gentleman settled in that port. Mr. Worsley was the author of a number of publications on religious, moral, and social subjects; the latest of which was his ingenious Essay to prove that the American Indians are the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel.

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We have been informed, of the death of that veteran servant to the Unitarian cause, our old and faithful missionary, the REV. RICHARD WRIGHT;—but we are not yet acquainted with the particulars of his death, and therefore can only give this brief, respectful notice of the event. The “Review of his Missionary Life and Labours,” published by him in 1824, gives a full and interesting account of his public exertions.

## TO SUBSCRIBERS.

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We have heard, from several quarters, that the “GOSPEL ADVOCATE” is supposed to be entirely defunct. We are not surprised at the report, when we consider the irregularity in the delivery lately occasioned by the failure of our London publisher, and by some other untoward circumstances;—but we take this opportunity of assuring the Subscribers that it is our present determination to proceed. The Advocate is now published in London by John Mardon, 7, Farringdon Street, of whom any of the back numbers may be had. Subscribers will oblige us greatly by mentioning this to their country booksellers, and completing their sets without delay.

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. XL.

NOVEMBER, 1836.

VOL IV.

## “THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST,”—WHAT IT IS, —AND IS NOT.

The influence of mere words, the potent charm of settled phrases, as they affect the opinions and feelings of the great majority of mankind, on the most important subjects of thought, has often been ably exposed by metaphysical philosophers. The reader of Locke, in particular, will remember his masterly investigations into this fruitful source of fallacy and error, in the ninth and tenth chapters of the third book of the “Essay concerning Human Understanding.” One remark of this great writer is so much to our present purpose, that we cannot refrain from quoting it. “Men,” he says, “having by a long and familiar use annexed to words certain ideas, are apt to imagine a *necessary connection* between the words and the significations they use them in;—and so likewise, taking the words of others as naturally standing for just what they themselves have been accustomed to apply them to, they never trouble themselves to explain their own meaning, or to understand clearly the meaning of others. From whence commonly proceed noise and wrangling, without improvement or information, whilst men take words to be the constant regular marks of agreed notions, which in truth are no more than the voluntary and arbitrary signs of their own ideas.”

But however frequently this prejudice may have been exposed by philosophers, the mass of mankind are yet far from having any just consciousness of its influence on their own sentiments. It is not the ignorant and un-educated alone who are subject to this delusion; if it were so, it would require no special endeavours for its correction, as it would be sure to disappear from the reasoning and discourse of all well instructed people. But it is an error which has much too deep a root in the

very nature and use of language,—that most imperfect medium of thought,—to be so easily eradicated, or to be confined to any one class of men. We are all liable to have our judgments and feelings affected by this delusive assumption, in the most serious concerns of life; and there are many who are completely blinded by it, in respect to questions on which they are wont to speak with the air and tone of infallibility. The interests of moral and religious truth have naturally suffered more from this cause than the physical sciences, or any other department of human knowledge; because on moral subjects, as we have not to deal with visible and tangible things, there is the greater difficulty in preserving a steadiness and precision of connection between words and ideas. And within the whole wide range of moral truth, it may be doubted whether any subject has been involved in greater obscurity, or corrupted with greater errors, from this one cause, than the pure Christian religion as delivered in the Scriptures. The very intensity of our feelings on this subject, is unfavourable to that patient enquiry, and that calmness of mind, which are necessary to the formation of a sound judgment concerning the agreement, or incongruity, between the ideas which *we* attach to the words and phrases of Scripture, and those which were originally attached to them by the sacred teachers themselves. And yet the slightest inaccuracy in this respect, according to the extravagant importance now commonly given to religious opinions, may lead to the most awful consequences. Here, the smallest deviation in the sense of a leading expression, may substitute fatal error for saving truth, and cause the everlasting damnation of creatures who might have enjoyed immortal felicity. These, we say, are the consequences which may result from any serious delusion in regard to the sense of certain Scriptural phrases, according to the extravagant importance now generally ascribed to soundness of religious opinion. But setting aside these groundless, melancholy fancies, concerning the dependance of men's eternal salvation on the correctness of their faith, there can still be no doubt that the most mischievous effects are produced by the cause of which we are treating. In recent numbers we have discussed two remarkable instances of this, the one

concerning the sense of the word “*Faith*,” as employed by Christ, when he taught the necessity of cultivating the sentiment, and ascribed to it a high moral worth; the other concerning the sense of the phrase “*Word of God*,” as it is used in Scripture, and there set forth as the object of every true believer’s veneration. We shewed that in both these instances, the popular, theological sense of the terms in question, is materially different from their real Scriptural sense; from whence arise spiritual presumption, bigotry, and all uncharitableness. The advocates of reputed orthodoxy, to use again the significant language of Locke, “take the words of others, (Christ and his Apostles,) as naturally standing for just what they themselves have been accustomed to apply them to”; and hence they would transfer to their own miserable errors, the authority and reverence due only to the lessons of inspired wisdom.

We wish now to call the attention of our readers to another example of the same kind of fallacy. “*The DOCTRINE of Christ*,” is another favourite theological expression, in constant use with those who fancy that the salvation of men depends on the strength of their belief in particular dogmas. The expression is, of course, found in the Scriptures, and a weighty meaning of some kind is there attached to it; otherwise it would not admit of such serious abuse. The friends of reputed orthodoxy take this expression, (as they do those of “*Faith*” and the “*Word of God*,”) from the Scriptures; and they employ it to signify a certain number of religious tenets, articles of belief, *doctrines* properly so called, according to the present established sense of that word,—in complete distinction from *moral precepts*, commandments, lessons, and exhortations. We appeal to every one’s experience and recollection, whether this be not the meaning of the phrase, “the doctrine of Christ,” in the mouths and writings of the generality of Christians. They allow, indeed, that Jesus Christ was a wise moral Teacher, that he delivered the purest instructions concerning our duties to God and to one another:—but in distinction from these lessons of virtue and piety, they maintain that Jesus was the Teacher, either directly or through his inspired Apostles, of certain peculiar, mysterious articles of be-

lief, which it is especially necessary to hold with implicit faith, in order to salvation;—and it is in this latter sense emphatically, exclusively, that they speak of “the doctrine of Christ.” They assume likewise, that their own theological tenets are precisely those articles of faith which Christ thus inculcated; and, therefore, that all who do not embrace the same tenets, are liable to all the consequences attributed in Scripture to a wilful rejection of “the doctrine of Christ.”

Now the objection which we take to this fallacy is two-fold. First, we object that, in the present divided state of the Christian world, it is extremely arrogant for any one class of believers to assume thus confidently, that their own tenets alone comprise the essential articles of belief imposed by Christ, and that all other views of the Gospel must be damnably erroneous. But secondly, and at this time chiefly, we object that they give an unwarrantable sense altogether to this Scriptural expression, “the *doctrine* of Christ.” We contend that in the Scriptures, this expression never means any number of specific, peculiar articles of belief, in distinction from moral instruction, (whether or not Christ inculcated any such articles of belief, which is a question we do not now agitate,) but it means nothing more or less than *the general teaching of Christ*, which all must allow to consist principally of moral instruction, of wise preceptory lessons in piety and virtue. We repeat, that in Scripture, “the doctrine of Christ” means the *teaching* of Christ in general; and we say, moreover, that in those very parts of Scripture where a most serious importance is attached to the rejection or adoption of “the doctrine of Christ,” it appears to be used with especial reference to the moral commandments of our Lord, so as especially to include and imply that from which the upholders of a systematic orthodoxy would have it to be entirely distinguished.

We hope in the end to make this position evident, by an examination of the passages referred to. But first it may be expedient to remark, that there is no obstacle to our view of the subject, on the contrary, there is a strong confirmation of it, in the proper etymological sense of the Scriptural word which is translated “doctrine.” The English reader, accustomed only to the theological sense

of the term “doctrine,” as signifying an article of belief, may be likely to feel some prejudice against the more extended sense of the term for which we argue in the present case. Nothing is more certain, however, than that the Greek word employed in these passages of Scripture, (*διδαχη*) does not mean a *doctrine*,—(which would rather be *δογμα* from *δοκεω*,)—but it means simply *teaching* or *instruction*. It is a verbal noun formed from the common Greek verb *διδασκω*, which signifies to *teach*, and it has no other than this general sense.

Let us turn, then, to the passages in question. It is somewhat curious, in relation to our present argument, that the very first instance of its use in the Christian Scriptures, is in reference to our Lord’s sermon on the mount—that most wise, pure, and beautiful example of moral teaching, unmixed with a single speculative dogma. We are told (Matthew, v. v. 1, 2.) that Jesus seeing the multitudes, “went upon into the mountain, and *taught* them”;—then, at the close of this admirable discourse, (Matthew, vii, v. 28, 29,) we are informed that, “when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his *doctrine*, (*teaching*), for he *taught* them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” The “*doctrine of Christ*,” therefore, should mean his moral teaching, his heavenly lessons of piety and goodness, such as he delivered in the sermon on the mount.

So again we read, (Mark iv, v. 1, 2.) that Jesus “began to *teach* by the sea side; and there was gathered unto him a great multitude; and he *taught* them many things by parables, and said unto them in his *doctrine*, (*teaching*).” Then follows the parable of the Sower, and other specimens of our Saviour’s wise moral instruction. The same is obviously the sense of the expression in various other parts of the Gospels; as in all the places where the hearers of Jesus are said to have been astonished and affected by “his *doctrine*.” There is nothing in the context of those passages to shew that our Lord had been recently delivering any new or wonderful doctrines. It was his profound knowledge of the spiritual wants and frailties of the human heart, his holy and sublime lessons of duty, the purity, compassion, and greatness of his character, as evinced by the moral truths and sentiments which he uttered,—it was

this, and not any mysterious dogmas, which excited the people's astonishment and admiration. A similar meaning plainly belongs to the expression where Christ himself says to the Jews, (John, vii, v. 16, 17,) " My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me :—if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The same is also its meaning, where we read of the primitive disciples, (Acts, ii, v. 42,) that " they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The apostle Paul, in his epistles, makes use of a word slightly differing in form only, (*διδασκαλία*,) but exactly of the same derivation, and of a similar meaning, where he says to Timothy, (1 Tim. iv, v. 13,) " Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,"—that is, to *teaching*; and again, (2 Tim. iii, v. 16,) " All Scripture is profitable for doctrine," for *teaching*, " for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

But the most important passage, that on which the pleaders for belief in a system of doctrines would chiefly rely, yet remains to be considered. It is in the second epistle of John, (verse 9.) " Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in *the doctrine of Christ*, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Now it is perfectly clear to our minds, that by " *the doctrine of Christ*" in this place, is meant the general practical *teaching* of Christ; or that, if there be any especial reference, it is not to any theoretical articles of belief, but to the great commandment of Christ, that we should " love one another." This appears from the context. In the sixth verse we read, " And I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it". Then, after alluding briefly to some who denied the very existence of the Christ, he says, " look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the teaching of Christ, he hath both the

Father and the Son.” The thoughts of the apostle were evidently directed towards those gracious words of Christ, which he has himself recorded in his own Gospel, (xiv, v. 23,) “ If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. If ye keep my *commandments*, ye shall abide in my love.” The reward promised in both places is the same, that men should have the Father and the Son abiding with them, or enjoy the moral approbation of both God and Christ. Doubtless, also, the terms or conditions of the blessing are the same in both places,—that men should abide faithfully in the teaching, in the *commandments* of Christ, especially in the great duty which he so solemnly inculcated, “ that we *love* one another.”

It is strange, indeed, that in many of these places our translators should have thought of giving so awkward and inappropriate a rendering as that of “ doctrine,” where “ teaching” would have been in all respects so much better. Their choice is accounted for by the fact, that their own minds, as theologians, were already fully possessed with the notion, that a certain set of *doctrines*, such as are stated in the Thirty-nine Articles or the Assembly’s Catechism, in addition to the great and simple principles of all true religion, must lie at the very foundation of Christianity;—a notion which we make bold to affirm is entirely without countenance from the Scriptures, entirely foreign to the peculiar character of revealed religion in general, and of the Gospel in particular, however necessary it might seem to minds educated in the theological, scholastic systems, of the middle and corrupt ages of the Church. Neither Jesus nor his Apostles taught religion in any such manner. They occupied themselves with the practical, didactic application of great moral principles to the spiritual wants of human nature, and to the especial circumstances of their hearers. What was new in their religion consisted chiefly, not of *doctrines*, but of *facts*, such as the divine mission of Christ, his miraculous works, his resurrection from the dead, and the various spiritual gifts received by his disciples after his departure. On the basis of these providential and miraculous events, there was founded a moral dispensation, a spiritual kingdom, which has diffused amongst all the civilized nations of the world,

through the *teaching* of Christ, the sanctifying and cheering influence of those blessed truths which concern the unity, the perfections, the universal providence, the moral government of God, the accountability and the immortality of man. This is our conception of the true nature and purposes of Christianity, as we learn them from the Scriptures. With these proper moral effects of the Gospel, the speculative and metaphysical dogmas of theologians, which they dignify with the name of “the doctrine of Christ,” have as little concern as the disputes respecting light and heat have with the glorious and beneficent operations of the Sun, which still, whilst philosophers invent and abandon their theories, shines on in the heavens with unabated splendour, giving life, warmth, and abundance, to the whole animated creation of God. It would indeed be the greatest of mysteries, if the only wise God had left the fulfilment of his merciful purposes, for which he raised up our Lord Jesus Christ, to depend on such niceties of interpretation and subtleties of opinion, as those which have long distracted the minds of the speculative, disputatious, part of the Christian world.

## ON THE STUDY OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT.

The Jews are familiar with Hebrew, the language of Moses and the prophets: the Mahomedans quote continually the original Arabic of the Koran, and embellish their temples, their houses, and even their garments with its texts: the Roman Catholics read the Scriptures in the Latin Vulgate, which is their sacred language, more than in their mother tongue. But Protestant Christians in general appear to cherish for the sacred language of Christianity no interest or affection whatever. While they reject the Fathers, the Councils, and the Traditions of the Church, and professedly embrace the New Testament as the sole guide of their faith and practice, yea, while they read *translated* portions of the sacred book every day, and surround themselves with laborious commentators on its text, that they may the better apprehend its meaning, these same worthy persons are, in general, content to remain as ignorant of the Christian Scriptures in their original

language, as they could be if no such volume had survived the ravages of time.

It will hardly be denied that there is something extraordinary, and difficult to be accounted for, in this state of things. It might reasonably have been expected that enlightened Christians, so well informed, so well educated as they are, and really valuing their Scriptures in so pre-eminent a manner as they certainly do, would have studied their own sacred language with peculiar zeal and affection, *con amore*; and that hardly any educated persons would be found among them, who would not *boast* of more or less acquaintance with it. Whereas, in fact, it is too true, that even our clergy and ministers of all denominations have so slight a knowledge of this subject, that there is not one in twenty, no nor in fifty, who would commonly be able, if asked, to give the original words of any particular passage of the New Testament.

I own myself to be so much at a loss to account for this paradoxical state of things, that I will not waste my readers' time in attempting to do so. I will only observe, that the fact before us is not less to be regretted than wondered at. There is probably no study in which an equal portion of time and labor will be rewarded with fruits so pleasing and valuable, as that which is devoted to the original text of the Christian Scriptures.

The advantages of this study to every serious Christian mind are so obvious as hardly to require enumeration; yet I will briefly notice a few of them, because obvious as they are, the neglect of the subject proves incontestably that they are not duly considered.

One of them is, that the study of the New Testament in the original is the shortest and surest method of attaining something like a settled opinion, respecting the sense of the numerous passages of which conflicting interpretations are given by commentators. In this matter, persons who are not scholars often deceive themselves. Of what avail, say they, will be all such imperfect acquaintance with the Greek Testament as I can hope to acquire, in enabling me to judge of the sense of any passage respecting which the *doctors* disgrace? It will always be presumption in me to set up my own opinion as an umpire between theirs, and I will not attempt any thing which would prove me so con-

ceited. Now all this is modest and plausible, and yet it is quite delusive. It is clear that if such a person intends to attach to the controverted Scripture any sense at all, he has only one of two paths to take: either he must judge of the original for himself by such aids as criticism furnishes, or he must take as his guide one or other of the contending commentators, whichever he thinks most deserving to be trusted. The question then will be, whether on the whole he be better able to judge the sense of the text or the merits of the commentators. I say without a doubt, that in nine cases out of ten, it is much easier and safer to judge of the text than to judge of the commentators. In ascertaining the sense of a passage, a *moderate* knowledge of a language, and good common sense, will always go a great way, and almost always preclude considerable error. But to judge of the comparative critical abilities and judiciousness of learned men, and to know what allowance to make for their prejudices, ostentation, and caprices, is indeed a hard task, and one that only a man who is learned himself has any chance of performing well.

Who does not know that nothing is commoner than for commentators to raise a learned dust about passages that to plain, good sense, always were, and will be, as clear as day? In such cases a very moderate knowledge of the original is of inestimable value: it will often enable us to judge at once of the true character both of the question and the disputants. We shall perceive at once which of them is using his learning to puzzle the passage, and which to clear it. For instance, in the celebrated text in the Epistle to the Romans, where we read in *our* Vulgate, "of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever:" here, I say, no commentator can ever put a mere English reader in a position to estimate fairly the degree in which the original passage is equivocal. But this will be perceived at once by the plainest impartial scholar, who reads the words: "*ex hown ho Khristos to kata sarka, ho own epi pantown, Theos eulogehtos eis tous aiounas.*" The reader of these words will see at once that they are equivocal, that is, that they will fairly bear two interpretations, and that all the labors of all the learned men in the world can never make them otherwise. He will see that the sense is entirely regulated by the punctuation, and as he knows that the original Scriptures were written

without punctuation, he sees with ease the real nature of the question, and will be likely to enjoy a rest and satisfaction about it such as a mere English reader will not easily attain.

But let us not suppose that all the fruits of the sacred study here recommended are to be gathered only in the field of controversy. What! do we read great authors only to settle their disputed passages? Or rather would not these authors be but little injured, if all these passages were cut out of them? And would not the New Testament be almost as valuable as it is, if all its controverted parts were proved to be spurious? Assuredly? For the glory of that, as of every other good book, must be in such parts as neither are nor can be mistaken by any reader of sense and honesty. It is nothing but the wretched folly of religionists that has dragged into such mischievous and unseemly prominence so many of the more equivocal expressions of our holy oracles, while they have allowed a thousand precious and indisputable portions to sleep in silence and obscurity. But let me ask why we learn to read a classical, a French, or an Italian author? Is it to decide on their ambiguities, or to relish their beauties? For the very same reason we ought to read the Christian Scriptures in their original. Do not the Gospels abound with a most graceful simplicity, and elegant propriety, and touching pathos? And is there not in Paul a vigor and power not inferior to the greatest of writers? Does not every part of the sacred volume present intrinsic excellencies of a very high order, which, if only in a literary point of view, deserve our best attention? But how much more in connexion with that weight and importance which belongs to the treasures of inspiration!

It is a fond notion with many, that a translation of a great author will serve as well as the original, and this notion is often applied to the subject before us. Those who have read great authors in both ways know better: they know that in his own original expressions, there is much whose force and beauty no translation can convey. The New Testament is no exception to this rule. It has passages to which no translation can do justice. Who will say that the exclamation of Pilate "*ho geografa, geografa,*" loses nothing when rendered, "what I have written, I have written"? Or that, "*Heh de spatalowsa*

*zowsa tethnehke,*" is not somewhat feebly rendered "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

But waiving such comparisons, which might easily be multiplied, I think it will be admitted that, in reading ancient writers in their own language, there is a refined and intellectual pleasure. In reading the very words (*ipsissima verba*) which they wrote, we seem to be brought nearer to them and to form a more familiar acquaintance: we partake also of the same sort of very interesting feelings which all are conscious of in visiting ruins, and other scenes of ancient renown. An ancient author, in his own tongue, is no mean antiquity. But whatever force there be in such associations when applied only to common authors, it is surely greatly encreased when transferred to the founders of our religion. Paul wrote in Greek: he wrote the very words which we now read: by a little aid of fancy we can hear him addressing them to his followers with his own mouth. Men's minds are very differently affected by such sentiments, but in a greater or less degree I conceive they would be acknowledged by almost all.

These remarks are made with a view to recommend to all such as have leisure for mental cultivation, the very important and interesting study which has been mentioned. Some who are otherwise not indisposed may perhaps be deterred by the thought that the task proposed is very difficult and laborious. They may, however, rest assured that this is a mistake. To attain so much knowledge of Greek as to read the New Testament with ease and profit, is a task by no means formidable: an hour daily for a few months will suffice for its accomplishment. And surely, it may be said that the time so employed, and the acquisition so made, are such as no Christian man or woman will ever repent of. Many in all ages have shown their affection for their Master Jesus, in undertaking long and dangerous pilgrimages to the spots of his nativity, death, and burial. To us, who deem such enterprizes less necessary, is allowed an easier method of manifesting our attachment to him, and delight in his instructions, and it is that which has been indicated. In short, can it be doubted, that to study the Gospel in its original records, is an object most useful and becoming to all Christians?

## HYMN TO THE MOON.

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Roll on, thou radiant Goddess of the Night :  
 Thou virgin Queen, thro' crystal Heaven gliding,  
 Roll on, and in thy empire's luscious light  
 Watch o'er the world where noise is now subsiding.

Thy praise is hymn'd by nobler harps than mine ;  
 Yet let me mix among the sacred throng  
 Of bards, who once were favourites of the Nine,  
 And sing to thee, for thou canst hallow song.

The Lord of Day, when at his glory's height,  
 Shooting his dazzling beams from noon's high throne,  
 Or when he soars triumphant from the fight  
 With Darkness, wants the charm thou hast alone.

Thou glancest forth as if to calm the strife  
 Which roused and racked us all the livelong day,  
 That ere in sleep we drown the ills of life,  
 Our orisons we piously may pay.

Thou art the very spirit of Harmony  
 So grand yet soft, so solemn yet so dear,  
 Floating along thro' that immaculate sky,  
 Nought interrupts thy sweetly lone career.

Surely to us, forgetful, thou art saying  
 That worlds for ever calm behind thee spread,  
 Where beauty flourishes without decaying,  
 Elysian fields where rescued spirits tread.

Thou art, O empress of the silver bow,  
 Our fairest emblem of futurities,  
 The witness of devotion's silent vow,  
 Offered through thee, O cherisher of sighs.

Pale Melancholy loves to stray with thee,  
 When none besides will pity her distress ;  
 Pouring her griefs to move thy sympathy,  
 And thinks that thou canst make her sorrows less.

F. B.

## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SUPPOSED DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST.

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In the notions of many members of the Christian Church, respecting the agency employed to establish the religious system under which they live, there is much inconsistency, and a grossness which is neither accordant with the spirit of it, nor in itself allowable. I apply the epithet *gross* particularly to that prevailing notion of the appearance of the Awful Being, who is a Spirit, in human shape upon earth, and his subjection to the affections and the accidents of such a condition. It is not uncommon to hear such a humiliating circumstance praised as an act of infinite condescension in the Godhead ; and were it demonstrated that such condescension had ever been shown, we should not be wanting in praise to the Being whose we are, and whom it is our delight and consolation to serve. In the absence of that positive proof,—the proof, not of a few contested passages which will bear a natural and a very different meaning from the one assigned to them, but of express and ample revelation,—there is nothing to be drawn from the nature of the Godhead in direct support of such a notion, or rather, the notion appears totally irreconcileable with the divine nature and operations. In the ancient world men's ideas of these things were by no means refined and exalted. They were inclined to believe that the Deity was altogether such an one as themselves ; and if they retained some features of their Theology and Philosophy when they professed a faith in Jesus, and even imprinted them upon his pure system, the fact is less a subject of wonder than regret. To such a source may be attributed the errors which still infect the Christian Church, and destroy the beautiful simplicity of its doctrines ; but even if it were not so, we should ascribe them to an ignorance similar to that which prevailed among the Gentiles, to a grossness of mind which impeded its soarings to the infinitude of perfection that inheres in Deity, and narrowed its comprehension of the lofty schemes which infinite wisdom frames.

No truth can be more certain and undeniable than this, That the Omnipotent Jehovah can only act in a manner consistent with his nature and worthy of Himself. He did descend, in times long past, to manifest himself to a few

of His creatures—this fact is indisputable; for it rests on the same evidence which ascribes a divine authority to the Jewish and the Christian religion. We investigate the appearances by which he betokened his immediate presence, and find in them a subdued representation of that grandeur which attends Him ever. Whilst there is such an indication of his presence as man may behold and yet live, neither oppressing too much with its awe, nor dazzling and bewildering with its inconceivable splendour, this indication bears the high and sacred marks of divinity. The Israelites journeying through the wilderness were guided by the symbols of God's presence—by the fire and the cloud. His glory rested on the tabernacle. On Mount Sinai they gazed with astonishment and deep reverence when the law was proclaimed to them, and they feared exceedingly to approach the awful spot. When Moses, his faithful servant, requested without due consideration permission to look upon the majesty of Jehovah; when encouraged by his condescension he said, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory;" the answer was, "There shall no man see me and live." This prophet and many others enjoyed the high privilege of witnessing the manifestations of Jehovah's presence, and these were of such a nature as to carry conviction with them without a sacrifice of dignity. Familiarly acquainted with the narratives of these things in the Old Testament, we take the Christian scriptures in our hands; and we bear in mind the assertion often made and repeated, that the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity—the Being by whom the patriarchs and prophets were visited and inspired,—was openly manifested in Judea, took upon himself the nature of man, the name of Jesus, and bore the pains and the sorrows of mortality. But we look in vain for any similarity in the appearances, for any fact on which so startling an assertion can be founded. Comparing the writings of the historians and prophets of the Old Testament with the writings of the Evangelists, we pronounce without hesitation that they are not occupied with the same Great and Awful Being. In these we discover the life, the habits, the conduct of a divine messenger; in those the traces of God himself. In these a derived being appears, and speaks, and acts; in those an underived. Here, we find references to the will, the

commission, the support, the superintendence of another ; there, the exalted Agent speaks in his own person, of his own will, of his own government over the universe. Here we read of human virtues and human trials, of strength and consolation sought and obtained : there no imperfection falls under our notice, but all is majesty and perfection. Here there is a commanding of the soul in the agonies of death to the keeping of the Eternal Father ; there eternity of existence confounds our mental powers.

Nor does this comparison place before us all the facts which negative every argument in favor of the personal identity of the founder of Christianity, and the majestic Being who appeared at various times and in divers manners to Moses and the prophets, and establish our minds in the satisfactory and full conviction that Jesus Christ was a messenger of grace and peace from God, the Father of himself and of all mankind. In the histories of his faithful friends and followers, this character, and this alone, is pourtrayed of him. As a divine messenger he taught ; as a divine messenger he acted ; and if Scripture and the unbiased reason of mankind were permitted to sit in judgment upon the question so long at issue among Christians, we cannot but think that the leading doctrine of Orthodoxy would be speedily and generally renounced as an unfounded dogma.

There is another fact which confirms this representation, and separates by a still wider interval the agent in the establishment of Christianity, and the Jehovah of the Hebrew scriptures, viz. the effect of Christ's sufferings upon his own character. That he was benefitted by the discipline he underwent in discharging the duties of his laborious and painful undertaking, evidently appears, not from confused inferences and inconclusive arguments, but from the open, clear, and irrefragable testimony of Scripture. We shall not now enter on any arguments, nor cite the passages on which they would be founded, but content ourselves with the assertion that we speak the truth in Jesus, and but reiterate the declarations of inspired teachers, when we ascribe his great moral excellence to the discipline he underwent, and the honors and rewards he is enjoying, to the diligence, integrity, and faithfulness of his conduct.

There is another view in which the conduct of Jesus should be considered, which also connects itself with the general question respecting his person, and adds strength to those representations of it that leave the Unity of the Supreme Being undisputed and perfectly indisputable. The example of our Lord is held up for our imitation and very justly so by the sacred writers—"Even thereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." If in displaying this example he advanced by degrees to the excellence of it, and if it be recommended to our imitation, there is in it nothing beyond mortal perfection; and it is therefore such an example as belongs to a human being. It is the example of the man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs—the example of the Son of Man—of the faithful servant of God—of the honored messenger of his will, the instrument of his designs, and the object of his care and love. Is not the exhibition of high character one object in the economy of the gospel? In the Old Dispensation, God was pleased to establish certain laws founded on his own express authority; under the New he commissioned his faithful agent to declare his will, and, at the same time that he called men to righteousness and virtue, to lead them to the attainment thereof. None other than one possessing our nature could have accomplished this important purpose. An example to human beings must have been given by a human being; for virtues exhibited by any one possessing a nature superior to our own, and especially by one in whom divinity was inherent, would have forced all human virtue far into the shade, and the example would rather have retarded our efforts than given them a stimulus, because it was inimitable. If then, arguments in favor of our sentiments derived from this circumstance, are not actually of the same weight with those urged upon us by the fact that our blessed Lord himself was made perfect through sufferings, they are of the same character, and, as we have already observed, increase the number of the testimonies which together establish the undivided and strict unity of the Godhead.

*To be continued.*

## ABSTRACT OF THE NEW REGISTRATION ACT.

[In our last number we gave a summary statement of the leading provisions of the New Marriage Act. We now give a similar Abstract of the new Act for the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages.—ED.]

1. The registration, as the marriage Act, comes into operation on the first day of March, 1837. Two former Acts on this subject, (one passed in the 52nd year of the reign of Geo. III., and the other in the 4th year of Geo. IV.) are declared insufficient, and, *so far as relates to the registration of marriages*, are repealed.

2. The king is empowered to provide an Office in London, to be called "The General Register Office," and to appoint over it an officer to be called "The Registrar General," removable at pleasure.

3. The Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, or the Registrar General, subject to their approval, shall appoint clerks and servants to transact the business of this Office, and remove them at pleasure. The Lords of the Treasury shall fix the salary of the Registrar General, but so that it shall not at any time exceed the sum of £1000 per annum; and shall also fix the salaries of the clerks and servants, in proportion to their duties.

4. The salaries, and certain other expenses connected with the new system of registration, and chargeable on the *Consolidated Fund*.

5. One of the principal Secretaries of State, or the Registrar General with his approbation, may from time to time make regulations for the management of the General Registry Office, and for the duties of Registrars, Superintendent Registrars, &c., to be afterwards mentioned.

6. The Registrar General shall send once a year to the Secretary of State, an abstract of the number of births, deaths, and marriages, registered during the year; which abstract shall be laid before Parliament annually.

7. The Guardians of every Poor Law Union, are directed to divide their Union, or Parish, into such *districts* as they shall think fit, subject to the approval of the Registrar General. Every such district shall be made known and published as a "Registrar's District," and shall be called by a distinct name. The Guardians of the Poor shall

appoint a Registrar for each district, with such qualifications as the Registrar General shall determine. The Clerk to the Guardians of each Union shall, if he be qualified, and choose to accept the office, be appointed "Superintendant Registrar" of that Union or Parish; but if he refuse, or be not qualified, the Guardians shall appoint some other person to be the Superintendant Registrar. Every Registrar and Superintendant Registrar shall hold his office during the pleasure of the Registrar General.

8. In case any such Clerk to a Poor Law Union, holding office under this Act, shall be removed from his clerkship in the Union by the Poor Law Commissioners,—or in case any Registrar or Superintendant Registrar shall be removed by the Registrar General from his office,—notice of such removal shall be given by advertisement in some newspaper circulating within the county; and every person so removed shall be incapable of being re-appointed.

9. The Guardians of each Poor Law Union shall provide, out of the monies under their controul, a Register Office, according to a plan to be approved by the Registrar General, for preserving the registers of the districts in the Union; the custody of which shall be given to the Superintendant Registrar.

10. In cases where no Poor Law Unions shall have been formed by the 1st of October, 1836, the Poor Law Commissioners shall form temporary districts for the purposes of this Act, and the Registrar General shall appoint Superintendant Registrars to such temporary districts, subject to alteration as afterwards provided.

11. When Unions shall have been formed in those places, the temporary arrangements and appointments shall cease, and districts shall be settled and officers appointed by the Guardians of the Poor, as directed in Nos. 7, 8, 9.

12. Every Registrar shall have power, subject to the approval of the Guardins, to appoint a fit person to act as his Deputy in case of illness or absence; such Deputy being subject to all the provisions and penalties declared concerning Registrars, and in case of the death of the Registrar he shall continue to act till another is appointed.

13. The Registrar General shall furnish the Registrars with iron boxes to hold the register books; each box to

have two keys, (and no more,) one to be kept by the Registrar and the other by the Superintendant.

14. In case of the removal from office of any Registrar or Superintendant, he shall deliver up all register boxes, keys, books, &c. to his successor; if he shall refuse so to do, he may be brought by warrant from any Justice of Peace before two Justices, who are required to commit him to the common Gaol until the same shall have been delivered up, and also to grant a search Warrant for the books, keys, &c. as in the case of stolen goods.

15. Every Registrar, or deputy, must reside within the district for which he acts, and shall cause his name and office to be placed in some conspicuous place on or near the door of his dwelling house; and the Superintendant shall cause to be published lists containing the name and place of abode of every Registrar, or deputy, under his Superintendance.

16. The Registrar General shall cause to be printed a sufficient number of register books, of durable materials, containing forms for entering registries of births, deaths, and marriages, according to the Schedules annexed to the Act, all regularly separated and numbered

17. The Registrar General shall furnish these books, and printed forms for certified copies from the same, to every Superintendant Registrar, at a reasonable price to be affixed from time to time, by the Secretary of State; and the cost thereof shall be borne by the Guardians of the Union for which the Superintendant acts, out of the monies under their controul. Every Registrar is authorized and required to inform himself of every birth and death within his district after the said 1st of March, 1837, and to register the particulars, without fee or reward, (save as afterwards mentioned,) according to the forms provided in the Schedules of the Act.

18. The father or mother of any child born, or the occupier of any house in which any birth or death shall happen, may, within forty-two days after a birth or five days after a death, give notice of the same unto the Registrar of the district. In case of any new born child or dead body found exposed, the Overseer or Coroner shall give notice to the Registrar; and the master of any prison,

workhouse, or hospital, shall be for the purposes of this Act deemed the occupier thereof.

19. The father or mother of every child born after the 1st of March, or in case of the death, absence, or inability of the father or mother, the occupier of the house in which such child shall have been born, shall within forty-two days after the birth give information, *upon being requested so to do*, to the Registrar, of all the particulars required to be registered, according to the best of their knowledge and belief.

20. If any child be born at sea, the commanding officer of the vessel in which it is born, shall make a minute of the necessary particulars, and shall, on the first opportunity, send a certificate of the same through the Post Office to the Registrar General, who shall enter it in a book to be called the "Marine Register Book."

21. After the expiration of forty-two days from the birth, the Registrar shall not register except under the following circumstances :—It shall be lawful for the father or guardian of the child, or for any person present at the birth, within six calendar months afterwards, to make a solemn declaration of the particulars; and it shall then be lawful for the Registrar to register the said birth, *in the presence of the Superintendant*, and the Superintendant shall sign the entry as well as the Registrar :—for every such registry, the Superintendant shall have a fee of 2s. 6d. and the Registrar of 5s. over and above the fee afterwards allowed him by this Act for every registry. No register of birth shall be good in evidence, if 42 days have intervened between the birth and the registry, unless the above conditions shall have been complied with. Every person who shall knowingly violate these conditions shall forfeit a sum not exceeding £50.

22. After the expiration of six months, except in the case of children born at sea, no birth shall be registered. The penalty for knowingly violating this part of the Act is also the payment of a sum not exceeding £50;—and no registry of a birth made after six months have elapsed shall be received in evidence.

23. If any child shall have any name given to it in baptism, within six months after it shall have been registered, the parent or other person giving the name may,

within seven days after the baptism, deliver to the Registrar in whose custody the register of the birth of the child may then happen to be, a certificate of the baptism signed by the Minister ; and the Registrar shall thereupon, without any erasure of the original entry, register that the child was baptised by such a name, and shall forthwith send the said Certificate to the Registrar General. The Minister giving his certificate of baptism, and the Registrar on making the additional entry, are each entitled to the fee of one shilling.

24. Some person present at the death, or in attendance during the last illness of any person dying, or the occupier or some inmate of the house, shall within eight days after the death, on being requested so to do, give information to the Registrar of the necessary particulars. In case of an inquest on any dead body, the Jury shall inquire concerning these particulars, and the Coroner shall report to the Registrar.

25. In case any person die at sea, the commanding officer of the vessel shall make a minute of the particulars, and transmit it through the Post Office to the Registrar General, as in the case of births at sea.

26. Every Registrar, as soon as he shall be required so to do, shall, without fee, deliver to the Undertaker or other person having charge of the funeral, a certificate that the death has been duly registered : and this certificate shall be delivered to the Minister officiating at the funeral ; but if any dead body shall be buried for which no such certificate shall be delivered, the Minister shall give notice thereof to the Registrar within seven days, or forfeit a penalty not exceeding £10 for every offence,

27. Every person by whom the information contained in any registry of birth or death is given, shall sign his name, description as required by this Act, and place of abode, in the register, and no register shall be held good in evidence which is not so signed.

28. Every Registrar shall make out an account four times a year of the number of births and deaths he has registered and the Superintendent shall verify and sign the same ; and the Guardians or Overseers of the Poor shall pay the Registrar such sums as he is thereupon entitled to receive ; —namely, for the first 20 entries in every year 2s. 6d.

each, and 1*s.* for every subsequent entry. These sums shall be paid by the Guardians or Overseers out of the monies in their hands, and charged to the account of the respective parishes.

29. The Registrar General shall furnish the Rector, Vicar, or Curate of every *Church* in which marriages may be solemnized, and to the proper officers amongst Jews and Quakers, books and forms for certified copies of marriage registries, as afterwards provided.

30. Every clergyman of the Church of England, after solemnizing a marriage, shall register in duplicate, in two of the register books, the particulars of the marriage according to a Schedule annexed to the Act ; and every such entry shall be signed by the Clergyman, by the parties married, and by two witnesses. In case of marriages among Jews or Quakers, the proper officers of those sects shall make the entries in the same manner precisely as in Churches is required of clergymen.

31. In the months of April, July, October, and January, the Registrar shall deliver to the Superintendant of his district, on durable materials, a true copy of all the entries in the register book kept by him ; and the Superintendant shall verify the same, and when found correct, certify it under his hand to be a true copy ; and the Registrar shall keep each of the said books until it be filled, and then deliver it to the Superintendant to be kept in his office.

32. In regard to marriages, a similar quarterly copy of all entries made during the quarter, shall be delivered to the Superintendant by the Rector, Vicar, or Curate of any Church, or the proper officer in the case of Jews or Quakers ; and the Superintendant shall verify the same under his hand ; but in regard to marriages, when the two books are filled, one only shall be kept in the office of the Superintendant, and the other remain in the Church, or in the custody of proper officers among Jews or Quakers.

33. Every Superintendant Registrar, shall four times a year send to the Registrar General all the certified copies of registers which he shall have so received ; and if it shall appear that the copy of any part of a book has not been duly delivered to him, he shall as far as possible procure the same to be remedied ; and he shall be entitled to re-

ceive the sum of 2*s.* for every entry in such certified copies; and the certified copies so sent to the General Registry Office shall be there kept in such order and manner as the Registrar General, under the direction of the Secretary State, shall think fit, so that the same may be readily seen and examined.

34. Every Registrar, and every Clergyman, or proper officer amongst Jews or Quakers, having the custody of a register book, shall allow searches to be made in the same, and give a copy certified under his hand of any entry therein, on payment of the following fees:—for every search extending over more than one year 1*s.* and 6*d.* additional for every additional year, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for every single certificate.

35. Every Superintendent Registrar shall cause indexes of the books in his office to be made; and every person shall be entitled to search the said indexes, and to have a certified copy of any entry in the said books, on payment of the following fees; for every general search 5*s.*—for every particular search 1*s.*—and for every certified copy of an entry 2*s.* 6*d.*

36. In the same manner the Registrar General shall cause indexes to be made of all the certified copies of registers in his office; and these may be searched, and copies of any entry had, on payment,—for every general search 20*s.*—for every particular search 1*s.*—and for every copy of an entry 2*s.* 6*d.*

37. The Registrar General shall cause to be made a seal of his office, and every certified copy of an entry given from his office shall be stamped with the said seal; and all copies of entries so stamped shall be received as legal evidence of the birth, death, or marriage, but not otherwise.

38. All monies received under this Act, by or on account of the Registrar General, shall be paid into the Bank of England, to the credit of the King's Exchequer, at such times as the Lords of the Treasury shall direct.

39. It shall be lawful for every Clergyman, or the proper officer amongst Jews and Quakers, to ask of the parties married the several particulars required to be registered.

40. Any person who shall wilfully make a false state-

ment, for the purpose of its being inserted in any register of birth, death, or marriage, shall be subject to the penalties of perjury.

41. Any person who shall, without reasonable cause, refuse or omit to register any birth, death, or marriage, which it is his duty to register, or shall carelessly lose or injure any register book, whilst in his keeping, shall forfeit a sum not exceeding fifty pounds for each offence.

42. Any person who shall wilfully make any false entry, or wilfully injure any register book, or wilfully give any false certificate, shall be guilty of felony.

43. Provided, that no person charged with the duty of registering, who shall discover any error in the entries he has made, shall be liable to these penalties, if within one month he correct the error, in the presence of the parents or other parties concerned, or in their absence, in the presence of the Superintendent and two credible witnesses, by entry in the margin, without any erasure of the original entry.

44. All fines imposed by this Act, unless otherwise directed, shall be recoverable before any two Justices of the Peace; and in case the same are not forthwith paid after conviction, they may be levied by distress and sale of goods under the warrant of such Justices; and for want of distress, such Justices may commit the offenders to Gaol for not more than one month. One moiety of all fines shall go the person informing, and the other be paid to the Registrar General.

45. In case the sum to be paid on any such conviction shall exceed £5. the person convicted may appeal to the Quarter Sessions; but he must give notice of appeal within 3 days after the conviction, and shall either remain in custody, or enter into a recognizance, with two sureties, to appear at the Sessions, and abide the judgment of the Court.

46. No conviction, or adjudication made on appeal, or warrant of commitment, shall be void from any formal defect, or the case be removed to any higher court.

47. All letters to and from the Registrar General, relating to the execution of this Act, shall be free from the payment of postage.

48. Nothing contained in this Act shall affect the

registration of baptisms or burials as by law established, or the right of any officiating Minister to receive the fees now usually paid for the performance or registration of any baptism, burial, or marriage.

49. The Registrar General shall within three months after his appointment, furnish to the Guardians of the Poor in any Union or Parish, to be by them affixed to Church doors or other conspicuous places, printed notices specifying the several acts required to be done by persons desirous of solemnizing marriage, or of registering any birth or death.

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### SUNRISE—OCTOBER.

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The morning dawned, but no bright, glorious Sun  
Kindled our waking souls to hope and joy.  
Dark clouds obscured the pure ethereal vault,  
And deadening mist the earth.—I sighed,  
The gloom sank on my soul.—Again I looked,—  
A roseate hue touched the o'erhanging clouds,  
They glowed with light approaching. Now behold!  
Midst floods of glory, still more glorious,  
The Sun ariseth! The weak eye in vain  
Attempts to gaze, in awe and wonder lost;  
Yet on some isles, floating in radiance on,  
Outskirts of heaven, it turns its longing look,  
And thoughts unearthly fill the ravished soul.  
—My spirit! Hast thou never faithless sighed,  
When clouds o'erhung thy morn? Has ne'er a doubt  
Darkened thy faith? Behold thy Father's love  
Shines brightly over all, illumines all  
With rays of faith and hope; then in thy soul  
Receive its beams of light ineffable.

## SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF THE REV. RICHARD WRIGHT.

The name of Richard Wright, the Unitarian Missionary, whose recent death was noticed in our last number, is probably familiar to most of our readers. His persevering exertions for the dissemination of Unitarianism have been eminently useful; and his numerous publications extensively read. We therefore venture to hope that some account of his life and labours will be acceptable and useful. Such particulars as we shall notice, will be taken chiefly from the "Review of his Missionary Life," written by himself, and published in the year 1824, after he had settled as Minister of the Unitarian Congregation at Trowbridge, Wilts.

Mr. Wright, during his early life, occupied a very humble station, and was engaged, we believe, in a laborious avocation; but he was thus prepared for the incessant exertions and frequent privations of a missionary life. Religious impressions, and the desire of religious knowledge, were among his earliest recollections. His mind naturally tended to serious thought, and led him to take pleasure in reading and meditation. He was thus "likely to receive with ardor, the first system of religion that was presented to him in a plausible shape, with a shew of Scripture proof, by persons of whose good sense and piety he had a good opinion." The system so presented to his view was Calvinism; to which, when about fifteen years of age, he became a convert. And he observes, when speaking of this period,—"It was *proper Calvinism*, not what is now called moderate Calvinism. Believing it to be the truth of God, and fearlessly following it out, I felt its genuine impressions, its heart-withering influence, I was enveloped in its horrid gloom, and passed through its dismal shades. It marred the pleasures of my juvenile years, and substituted sadness of soul, in the place of youthful cheerfulness, which it in a good measure destroyed. I had, indeed, some bright days, while a Calvinist; for the light of the gospel sometimes glimmered upon me; though eclipsed, it was not totally extinguished; now and then its rays broke through the surrounding darkness. Still, I thank God that I was once a Calvinist, that I have

known by experience what Calvinism is. It was one important step in my progress. However erroneous, its peculiar doctrines are perverted truths, and some precious metal may be extracted from the baser materials. I received some impressions and ideas among Calvinists which I still deem valuable. Probably I should never have felt so deeply the value of Unitarianism, nor have been so zealous for its promotion, had I not passed through the intricate and perplexing regions of reputed orthodoxy : certainly I should not have been so well qualified to feel for, and instruct, those who are still wandering in that frightful labyrinth."

Mr. Wright was afterward favoured with more extended means of information, became better acquainted with religious parties and systems, and was led to a more careful examination of the Scriptures. The result of this was, that he soon became dissatisfied with the system of Calvinism, and at the age of 19 renounced it. The consequences of such a renunciation at such a time, may be easily conceived. He had to bear the pain consequent on a dissolution of the bonds of union and friendship with his earliest religious connections, persons whom he had highly esteemed, and to be subject to their censures. "But this helped," he says, "to prepare me to meet with composure, the censorious and illiberal treatment I have since had to experience from different religious parties." When will the Christian world learn and feel that of faith, hope, and charity, the greatest of the three is CHARITY !

It is unnecessary for us here to detail the laborious inquiries and discussions in which he engaged, the controversies in which he was involved, and the conflicts of mind which he passed through, in his search after truth. We shall only observe that, through his own exertions, and the persevering study of the sacred Scriptures, he at length became a Unitarian Christian. And then he felt an ardent desire to communicate to others those views which imparted to his own mind the purest satisfaction, and appeared to him calculated to make all men virtuous and happy. In the year 1794, being then about 30 years of age, he became minister of a congregation at Wisbeach, the members of which were not strictly Unitarian ; nor, indeed, did Mr. Wright at that time entertain precisely the same

views on all subjects, as he afterwards embraced. His income being small, he there opened a school, which he conducted for ten years; but at the end of that time he was induced by ill health, and the increase of other labours, to relinquish it. While residing there, he received invitations from other congregations where he would have had a larger income, but he had made up his mind not to leave Wisbeach until he thought the Unitarian cause firmly established there. During his residence at Wisbeach he was accustomed to make missionary visits, not only to places in the neighbourhood, but to others at a considerable distance. Often did he travel, and generally, if not always, *on foot*, across the north marshes of Lincolnshire, sometimes at the peril of his health, if not of his life, to visit the inhabitants of some scattered villages, who gladly welcomed among them the man who came to explain to them the Scriptures, and to promote the cause of truth and virtue.

"In the marshes of Lincolnshire," observes Mr. W. (Review p. 165) "the roads are very intricate, and were then very bad. Twice I was lost and benighted in travelling there. The first time, I was worn out with fatigue, when I reached the sea bank, about eight miles short of the end of my journey: the night had set in, there was no place nigh where I could stop, and overcome with fatigue, and affected by the coldness of the air, I felt an inclination to lie down on the snow and indulge the disposition to sleep, which was almost unconquerable,: but knowing that to do this might prove fatal, I roused myself and went on to the end of my journey. The other time, having to go a foot road about three miles from a village which I had reached when it became totally dark, to the place where I was expected to preach that night, I would fain have hired a person to conduct me: but the weather being very foul, I could not induce any person to do it. The road was through marshes lately enclosed from the sea, divided by water into different lots, and I understood there were deep holes full of water, in different parts of them. On one of these marshes I totally lost the path, the darkness was such that I could scarcely see my hand; I knew not what to do, a tremor seized me; if I attempted to go forward I might plunge into deep water and be lost; to remain deri-

long night on the spot where I stood, in such weather, might be fatal ; and in the darkness, could I move without danger, I knew not to what point to turn my steps. My mind was raised to God for support and deliverance ; and I became master of my feelings. I then considered which way they wind had blown during the day, and this gave, supposing it not to have changed, some little notion of the direction in which I must go. I stood still and surveyed the surrounding darkness, until I discerned distant lights in two directions. The one of them, but I knew not which, I supposed to be at a sluice by which I had to pass. Then, like the Indians in the wilds of America, I laid my ear close to the ground, and was able to hear the gullying of the water at the sluice for which I wanted to make. Still a great difficulty remained ; how was I to recover the path which would lead me out of the marsh, which was surrounded with water ? I had a walking stick, and by feeling before me and on each side, at every step, I reached the side of the marsh ; and so continued to feel my way, by the side of it, till I found a foot bridge, which led me out of it, and with much difficulty felt out the rest of the way. Once I travelled six or seven hours in those marshes in a most tremendous storm of wind and rain, and was wet through all my clothes nearly the whole of the time. Being engaged to preach that night, I determined if possible to be at the place where I was going by the time appointed ; this I accomplished in safety. The storm tore up trees by the roots, overturned buildings, wrecked many ships on that coast, and broke a sea-bank near Boston, by which a considerable tract of country was deluged, and many cattle and sheep destroyed. It was the most tremendous day in which I ever travelled ; but I thought myself in the way of duty, felt composed and happy, and sustained no serious injury. God gives strength according to our day.”

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[In our next number we propose to notice Mr. Wright's labors while acting as permanent Missionary under the direction of the Unitarian Fund.]

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*"Plain Words for Plain Men A Letter to the Presbyterians of Glastry, Kirkcubbin, and Ballywaltur; containing a Short Reply to several False Charges made against the People called Remonstrants. By WILLIAM HUGH DOHERTY, Minister of the Presbyterian Congregation of Ballyhemlin. Second Edition. Belfast: Simms and M'Intyre; S. Archer, Castle Place; H. Greer, High Street, and in London by J. Mardon, Farringdon Street. 1836."*

Ireland is at this moment, as indeed it has too long been, a country which excites the most profound and anxious interest in the breasts of politicians. The contest for civil and social reformation, for the correction of ancient abuses, for the establishment of just and impartial government throughout the British dominions, is for the present to be carried on chiefly in respect to that troubled island. But the same country is an object of scarcely less interest, on other grounds, to those who, like ourselves, believe that a thorough and extensive reformation of doctrine is still required in the Christian Church. It is well known that, within the last few years, Unitarian views of the gospel have been openly embraced in the north of Ireland, under circumstances highly favourable to their steady diffusion, amongst a people not inferior, we apprehend, in character and intelligence, to any class of religionists in the world. The Presbyterians of that country are the descendants of Scotch settlers, and seem to retain the qualities for which that shrewd and moral people are remarkable. We have lately had some disgraceful proofs, from the mouths of Messrs. Cooke and Josias Wilson, that a certain portion of these Irish Presbyterians are strongly imbued with the intolerant and bad feelings, which their narrow ecclesiastical system has in all ages occasionally produced. But it is cheering to know, that considerable numbers of them have fully adopted the rational doctrines, and the liberal spirit, which have likewise resulted from the more relaxed form of Presbyterianism in England. Under the title of *Remonstrants*, these Unitarians have separated from the Synod of Ulster, and similar secessions have taken place in other districts. They amount to many churches and thousands of worshippers. They have, of course, excited

the wrath of their orthodox neighbours. Every term of abuse, and the terrors of law in respect to their ecclesiastical property, have been levelled against them, as against their Unitarian brethren in this country. But they are men who know how to defend their characters and their cause. Many noble examples of this have already been exhibited, and are probably known to most of our readers. The small publication whose title is quoted above, is a plain, somewhat quaint, but effective attempt, to expose the illiberal misrepresentations of the orthodox concerning the sentiments of these Irish Remonstrants. Though written by an educated minister, it is designedly composed in a style suited to the humblest readers. This the author himself explains in his introduction :—

“ **MY GOOD FRIENDS,**—In this Letter I have made use of the shortest and easiest words fit to give you my meaning ; so that I hope the plainest person among you will be able to understand it, and that your little boy or girl may read it for you without much spelling.

“ You have all heard, no doubt, many strange stories of the people who have left your congregations, and built for themselves a new meeting-house in Ballyhemlim. You may have been told, that their religious opinions are dangerous, wicked, and sinful ; and this may have prevented you from going to hear what their ministers had to say for themselves. I intend to show you, in this Letter, that you have been imposed upon ; that we do not believe any one of those false and wicked opinions that have been fixed upon us ; and that those persons who go about repeating such stories are guilty of great rashness, injustice and falsehood.

I have divided my Letter to you into seven short parts or chapters ; so that you may either read right on, from the first to the last of it, or—if you have not much time to spare—you can turn to any part which you may wish to see first.

“ The following is an account of the substance of the different chapters :

“ I.—In the first place I will show you that it is not any sin to go to hear our sermons, or to read our books.

II.—In the second place, I will show that *our religion is not a new religion*, it being as old as the Bible.

III.—Then I will show that *we do not deny the Lord that bought us* ; but that we glory in confessing him as our Saviour, our Redeemer, and our Judge.

IV.—Next, I will prove to you that *we do not depend on our own works for salvation* ; but we know and say, that we are all sinners before God.

V.—I will then show you that *we are neither Arians, Socinians, Deists, Infidels, nor Atheists* ; and that those who give us such names are guilty of great wickedness in bearing false witness against their neighbours.

VI.—I will next give you a short, plain, and clear account of the points on which we differ from the followers of John Calvin, and the believers in the “Westmister Confession of Faith.”

VII.—Lastly, I will tell you what we *do believe*, that you may be as able to judge us yourselves, and not from hearsay.

At the end of his fourth chapter, the author gives the following summary of the points he has discussed,—which may be taken as a specimen of his thoughts and manner.

“As I am very anxious to make this Letter so plain and clear that you cannot mistake any part of it, and as I wish to use a simple mode of writing, stating over and over again, very often, the chief points to be held in view, I will now, before going on to another chapter, put you in mind of what I have already proved for you.

1st, I have shown that you need not be frightened by the threats of your minister, from going to hear our sermons, or from reading our books, as you have the positive command of the Apostle Paul to “prove all things,” and he ought to have known the matter better than any of your pastors. Even the touching lamentations and tears of real grief with which your spiritual guides sometimes entertain you, as they direct their streaming eyes towards the pews, once occupied, now deserted, the seatholders of which have gone to that place [Ballyhemlin meeting-house,] whence they are scarcely able to cherish the fond hope of any traveller’s return; even this grief of spirit, I say, though doubtless claiming your sympathy, should neither overpower your reason, put to flight your common sense, nor prevent you from obeying the Apostle’s command, by inquiring, thinking, and judging for yourselves.

2nd, I then proceeded to show you, that all the outcry which has been made about the *newness and strangeness* of our opinions is mere folly. I showed you that Moses believed firmly in our doctrine respecting the strict unity of God’s nature; that his solemn saying, first delivered to him by the Almighty himself for the instruction of the people, is, “Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is *one Lord*.” This saying he never changes nor explains away, but holds by it constantly. *He thus gives a most complete contradiction to the Trinitarian’s creed.* I have shown you that our blessed Lord repeats, approves of, and confirms by his own authority, this saying; that he never mentions, nor hints at the existence of a Trinity; and surely, had such a thing existed in the divine nature, our Lord would not have omitted to explain or mention it. I have next shown, that the Apostle Paul is exceedingly clear and plain in disavowing any belief in a Trinity; as he expressly says, “*To us there is but one God, the Father.*” From all this I proved, that *our religion is just as old as the Bible*; it having been believed and taught by Moses, by Christ himself, and by Paul.

3rd, I next showed you the errors into which you had been led respecting our belief in Christ; that so far from “denying the Saviour, the Lord that bought us,” I showed that we confess him as our only

Saviour, our powerful Redeemer, and our final Judge. I showed you that we revcrenced him as the Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord, who left the glory which he had with God before the world was, descended to this earth, taught men the true way of virtue and happiness, suffered, and at length died for their salvation ; that he hath now “ascended unto his Father and our Father, to his God and our God.” *John xx. 17.* Thus I proved to you, that the charge, so often and so wickedly made against us, of denying our Saviour, was *neither more nor less than a malicious and stupid falsehood.*

4th, Then, in the former part of this chapter, I pointed out to you the utter absurdity of another charge made against us by our enemies, namely, that we “depend entirely upon the merit of our good works for salvation.” This charge I overturned by showing you that we know and say, that we all, as well as others, have sinned against God, and come short of his righteous laws ; and therefore, that, so far from claiming rewards, we, in fact, merit only punishment. This I proved by many quotations from God’s word ; because on this, as on every other point of *our* creed, we find the most suitable words in the Book of God’s revealed will, without applying either to Catechisms or Confessions of Faith.

I hope I have made these four points quite plain to every one of you, and that your minds are satisfied of their truth.

What I have said, you see, is merely by way of removing some strange errors which seem to have been spread designedly among you, and which have prevented many of you from coming frankly forward to hear, examine, and judge for yourselves. I have not done yet with the arts of your deceivers ; but must proceed to show you how they have collected a number of old names, and because they think you do not know what these old names mean, and will therefore reckon their marks of some strange heresy, they have attempted to fix them upon us. We, however, refuse to adopt them ; and I purpose to show you that none of the abusive names usually coined for us are either owned by us, or are in any way applicable to *our* opinions.”

“ *The Religion of Love, contrasted with Religions of Fear. Four Sermons.* By WILLIAM M'KEAN. Sunderland : Printed by Edward Smith, High Street ; and sold in London by J. Mardon, 7, Farringdon Street. 1836.”

This little book is distinguished by great fervour of sentiment, much ingenuity and some originality of thought. The author, Mr. M'Kean, must be known, at least by reputation, to all who take a lively interest in the progress of Unitarian belief and worship, for his very zealous and successful labours with the rising congregation at Sunderland. This publication, by making known his talents

and style of preaching, explains in a great measure the causes of his success. He chooses heart-stirring themes, and his own mind glows with a strong sense of the attractions and sublimities of his subject. He is evidently possessed of the inward sources of true eloquence, vigorous thought and earnest feeling; although a *critic* would perhaps easily discover signs of unskilfulness and inexperience in the art of composition. The title of the book sufficiently indicates the subject:—"The religion of Love, contrasted with religions of Fear." It consists of four sermons on the text 2 Timothy, i, v. 7, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The author shews how entirely the pure Christian religion is based on the principle of *Love*. After tracing the corruption of this principle through the history of Popery, and the darkness of the middle ages, he thus boldly speaks of its existence in the Reformed Churches:

"The fears of the secular power of the church having been dispelled, a spirit of fear of a different kind arose wherever Calvinism in particular erected itself, and pervaded its modifications of Lutherism and Arminianism; in which religion is still attempted to be shewn as less shocking. Creation was represented as cursed by the Almighty, and man as a race destined to an eternity of misery. Such was and is the principle: and the details are, that every individual is a helpless victim of an uncompromising law,—who by his actions insures his own everlasting tortures, which shall surely be his portion, unless he has luckily for himself been elected to salvation, among a few whom God hath chosen, without the least reference to their works, whether good or bad. This bitter potion, which the reformed swallow, is the more unpalatable because it has to be taken mingled with an acknowledgment, that the Almighty purposed good, but evil has been the result—that he purposed holiness, and behold sin—happiness, and behold misery; and that all these failures are by the crossworking of an evil spirit, who had power to subvert the operations of the Omnipotent.

"Of what use to such doctrines can be the external evidences of the authenticity of the Bible? and who that reverences that volume would use it in controverting principles which carry "falshood" written on their front? and what could keep them in existence for a single day, in a country inhabited by an intelligent people, unless the powerful influence of the spirit of fear in the destruction of mind? This spirit silences the cries of outraged nature, when the creed dictates for acceptance the terrible constitution of things on which man is thrown in helpless shipwreck; it refuses tears to the afflicted mother over the everlasting misery of her offspring, and dries up their fountain by the burning sovereignty of a terrific decree; it demands resignation from the father, while he yields the fruit of his body to the devouring fires of hell; and it requires brother with brother to walk hand in hand

through life, in perfect equality of virtue, although the journey's end of the one be blessedness, and of the other perdition.

"Preachers, in general, of this dark, appalling theology, dare not face their principles—they dare not bring them to the light, in a whole and unbroken form. Fanatics alone speak out. If God's justice be described, then the torments of hell are introduced, with all their horrible scenery. If the beauties and attractions of divine love be the theme, even then eternity's miseries are described, and the good fortune of the elect is the subject of eulogium. Mercy itself falls in a torrent of wrath on a devoted substitute; and, strange to tell, God's love to mankind displays itself in measureless vengeance on his only Son. It is well that falsehood cannot be propagated in grossness, without destroying itself; otherwise the broad contradiction which the smiling face of nature unceasingly gives to the creed, would scarcely be able to neutralize the debasing effects to the spirit of fear."

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### LONDON DOMESTIC MISSION SOCIETY.

"The first stone of a New Chapel and School-room, in Spicer Street, Spitalfields, was laid on a piece of ground adjoining the premises at present occupied by the Society, on Tuesday, the 30th of August last. There were present more than three hundred persons, according to the computation of several individuals. These included a considerable number of the children belonging to the Sunday and Day Schools, some of their parents, and other persons of the immediate neighbourhood. The Rev. R. K. Philp, the Missionary in that district, shortly stated the object for which the assembly was drawn together and gave out a hymn. When this had been sung, J. T. Rutt, Esq., made a most excellent and appropriate address, shewing that the object of the Society was to raise the condition of the poor and sinful, to point out to them their true nature and dignity, and to encourage them in making such exertions towards providing for their physical and moral wants as should give them a feeling of independence, and of confidence in the God and Father of us all. He emphatically stated, that what the conductors of the Society desired was, "to level upwards"; to impart knowledge to the ignorant, peace to the miserable, the assurance of eternal love to the repentant guilty."

The building is now erected, and the workmen are rapidly proceeding with the interior. It will be seen by the advertisement, in the present No. that that Committee venture to put their trust in the importance of the object, and the liberality of the public. It is gratifying to learn from Mr Philp, that much interest has been expressed by the people in his district in the promise of increased accommodation for the various objects of the Mission. Numerous applications have already been made for admittance to the Schools. Several young persons have also offered themselves as teachers in the Sunday Schools, as soon as their services shall be required. In every respect the prospects of the Society in that neighbourhood are cheering. The Committee wish not to feel elated, or to elate others, unduly; but they have a strong conviction that they shall not labour, or their supporters be generous, in vain.

Hampstead, Oct. 17, 1836.

EDWIN CHAPMAN, *Secretary.*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. XLI.

DECEMBER, 1836.

VOL. IV.

## THE BISHOP OF EXETER'S SECOND TRIENNIAL CHARGE.\*

THE Bishop of Exeter has again favoured the world by the publication of his "*Charge*" to his clergy, delivered during his second and recent triennial visitation. We also feel again inclined to attempt a "*brief examination*" of some few matters contained in his lordship's admired and lauded production. In the present case, however, we shall be *very* brief; for most of the subjects treated of in this second Charge, relate to the internal pecuniary arrangements of the Church in which our readers are not likely to take much interest.

It is pleasant to find that, on this occasion, the Bishop is able to commence his Charge in exceeding good humour and good spirits. He "has, first, the gratifying duty of congratulating his reverend brethren on the improved tone of public feeling towards the Church and its ministers." The former "jealousy and distrust, and desire for extensive changes," he says, are now no longer manifested by "the people at large." His lordship has not informed us, on what grounds he rests this comfortable conviction; and as we have not been able ourselves to discover any signs of such an improved state of public feeling towards the Church, we fear that we cannot, even by conjecture, help our readers to comprehend the reasons of the Bishop's satisfaction. Is it derived, in any measure, from the accounts which we almost daily see in the newspapers, of the refusal to levy Church rates, in the most populous and enlightened towns of the kingdom? Is it at all founded on one of the last acts of the House of Commons, at the close the late session of Parliament, in refusing to pass a Bill, professedly intended for the reform of the Church, because it was not sufficiently extensive in

\* "Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter, by the Right Reverend Henry Lord Bishop of Exeter, at his Triennial Visitation, in the months of August, September, and October, 1836. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street."

its provisions against existing corruptions, although it was supported by all the influence of Government? But why should we trouble ourselves to guess at the *reasons* of the Bishop's present comfortable state of mind? Or, what if he should have *no* reasons? Should it not be enough to delight the hearts of us all, to know that he *is* comforted? Surely no man, still less a Bishop, is obliged always to give a reason for his being contented and happy. Our only apprehension is,—that as the Bishop of Exeter commenced his former Charge with declaring that “gloom and darkness hung over every sacred institution of the land,” but soon afterwards, according to his own confession, discovered that this was a mistake, and saw reason to thank God that there was “every thing to be hoped for the Church,”—so, on this occasion, there may shortly a similar “change come o'er the spirit of his dreams:” where he now perceives some gleams of brightness, he may again see nothing but the former “gloom and darkness.” We strongly suspect, indeed, that he is endowed only with a certain quickness of vision, without much either of foresight or penetration. It is curious to observe in passing, as a proof of the almost delirious effect which the Bishop's joy at the improved prospects of the Church must have had on his mind, that,—although famed for skill and experience in composition,—he has actually suffered the very first paragraph of his “Charge,” in which he gives expression to this joy, to stand in a form which is entirely without common grammatical dependence. Yet such is clearly the case in the following fragment of a sentence:—“while the people at large are content to look,—with solicitude, indeed, proportioned to the greatness of the subject under consideration,—but with patience, with calmness, and with readiness to find worthy of acceptance and approbation, whatever plan of Church Reform shall, after due reflection, and on sound principles, be proposed to them by proper authority.”

His lordship speaks, with mingled feelings of pleasure and apprehension, respecting the new Tithe Commutation Act. He admits that the operation of the Act, “if the Commissioners be intelligent and honourable men,” will not be at all injurious to the interests of the present generation of clergy. But he laments bitterly, that it will tend

to cut off the right of the clergy, in future generations, to take a tenth of all the benefits of future improvements, and increased productiveness, in agriculture ;—that is to say, he complains that the Act will operate effectually to the very purpose for which it was passed ; this power of the clergy to seize a tenth of the gross produce of the farmer's industry, skill, and capital, (whether the actual profits amounted to more or less than a tenth,) and thus either to check all agricultural improvement, or to take the benefit of it entirely to themselves, who risked no capital, and bestowed no pains,—this being, we say, the very grievance which rendered it necessary to pass such an Act. The Bishop speaks, indeed, of the right of the clergy to “ their fair share in that augmentation of the produce of land, which shall be caused, not by any special and occasional employment of capital, but by the general advancement of agriculture as an art by the application of the discoveries of science to the culture of the earth, by the introduction of new articles of produce,” &c. Could his lordship really be blind to the fact, which a child must perceive, that none of these advantages can be enjoyed by the cultivator of the soil, without the “ special employment,” and oftentimes, the imminent risk, of his own labour and capital?—“ In all these common benefits, these boons of a gracious Providence to man,” says the Bishop, “ the owner of the soil has no special right which can justify the shutting out the owner of the tithe from his proportionate share.” Indeed ! Then if a new machine be invented, or the utility of a new species of manure be discovered, the farmer who purchases that machine, or sends to a great distance for that species of manure, has no more right to the fruits of this application of his own money and labour, than the clergyman who only smiles complacently at these improvements, as he rides through the farm to meet the fox hounds ! Truly this was a very pleasant doctrine to be delivered to the clergy ; but we doubt whether it would be quite so well received in a congregation of yeomen. It is well that it occurs in a *concio ad clerum*, not *ad populum*. His lordship tells the clergy that they must “ not omit to bring forward every consideration which may be expected to raise the amount of compensation.” He has thrown out sundry hints respecting the capacity and honesty of the Commissioners. In short, an enemy would say he has done all he possibly

could, to render the operation of the new Act a source of increased jealousy, bickering, and quarrels between the clergy and the people.

The Irish Church Bill, which the Government introduced, but failed to carry, in the last session of Parliament, becomes, as might be expected, another favourite theme of invective to the Bishop of Exeter. He congratulates his brethren on the failure of this Bill. This alone, from such a quarter, would be very passable. But the language in which he expresses himself on this subject, exceeds in absurdity and impertinence any thing that ever fell, perhaps, even from his lips or his pen. He congratulates the clergy that "those moderate funds," (the revenues of the Irish church,) "which the piety and wisdom of former ages have provided for the maintenance, and the extension, of a pure faith throughout Ireland, have not become the prey of a perfidious faction,"—meaning, as his subsequent words fully prove, the Irish Catholics! Funds provided by the piety of former ages for the extension of what the Bishop calls a pure faith? Why, is it not notorious to every one who knows a line of history, that the greater part of the revenues of the Irish Church, all the tithes certainly, were provided by the piety of *Catholics* in former ages, for the maintenance of the *Catholic* religion, by the piety of the ancestors of this very people, and for the religion of this very people, whom the Bishop now designates as "a perfidious faction," because they support the designs of a Protestant Government to apply a portion of these revenues to purposes of universal education? Is it not notorious, that these revenues were wrested by conquest and violence from the Catholics, whose pious ancestors had provided them for the maintenance of the Romish faith? And what is it that is now proposed? Not that these revenues should be wholly, or in the slightest degree, restored to their original application, (though the *people* of Ireland still remain Catholics,) but only that whatever surplus may exist, after the reasonable wants of the Protestant Church are supplied, should be employed in supporting schools for general education! Because the Catholics do not oppose, but support, this project of the British government, the Bishop of Exeter reviles them in the absurd and insulting language which we have quoted. It is perfectly in the spirit of Lord Lyndhurst's

celebrated speech,—“aliens in religion, aliens in language, aliens in blood.” This is the way, doubtless, to pacify and conciliate the Irish nation. If Mr. O’Connell were one of the weakest, as he is one of the strongest of men, this treatment of the Irish people by the High-Church zealots of England would soon give him the might of a giant.

“Amongst the most important legislative measures of the Session,” (says the Bishop,) “are the Act for registering births, deaths, and marriages; and the Act for marriages in England.” He is, of course, dissatisfied and displeased with both. “The former,” he says, is become comparatively harmless, since the unchristian provision, originally introduced into the Bill, for the naming the child before baptism, has been withdrawn.” Now, as we read the new Registration Act, the Bishop seems to mistake its provisions, and is here congratulating himself and his brethren on fallacious grounds. Does he suppose that, as the Act now stands, a child must be baptised, before it can be legally *registered by name*? He is much mistaken, if that be his understanding of the law. It is only provided, that if any child shall receive a certain name in baptism, after registration, this circumstance *may* be communicated to the Registrar, and the fact inserted as an addition to the original entry. But previous to baptism, and if no baptism ever takes place, the child may be legally *registered by name*. And will his lordship inform us, on any authority better than his own *dictum*, what there is “unchristian” in such a provision? The practice of infant baptism, indeed, is so old and general a practice of the Christian Church, and it is in itself so innocent, sometimes so impressive and edifying, that whatever may be our own opinion of its authority, we are inclined to speak of it with all respect. But that a child must not have the *name* which it is to bear assigned it previous to this ceremony, is a notable superstition, surely, to be broached by a right reverend prelate and legislator before assembled divines and statesmen?

The Bishop reserves the *fulmen* of his indignation for the new Marriage Act. “It contains matter which, but a few years ago, it would have been deemed impossible to induce a British legislature to place on the statute book,

and which hardly any sane person would then have had the hardihood even to propose." Very likely to be true is all this. We live in times of rapid change, some of us think them times of reformation. But how do the novelty and boldness of the law prove it to be a bad one? His lordship is offended, that "no distinction is expressed, none is necessarily implied, between churchmen and dissenters." Does not the Bishop see, quick-sighted as we have allowed him to be, that this is the professed object and tendency of all our modern legislation,—the very effect which the great majority of the people, including all enlightened churchmen as well as dissenters, desire to witness, and which no Government, of whatever party it may consist, can any longer retard? Does he not see, that half the laws which have been passed for several years have had this purpose in view,—to destroy the odious distinction of religious sects, in reference to all civil and secular rights, all the burdens and all the privileges of the state? The sooner he can make himself duly aware of this fact, the better for him, as it may save him the pain of astonishment and alarm at some future changes, which must shortly take place. But he is most indignant at that provision of the Act, which *allows* those persons to marry without a religious ceremony, who are themselves avowedly unwilling to observe any. "This," he says, "is to degrade matrimony, so far as the act of a mortal legislature can degrade it, from a holy ordinance of God, to a simple contract between two human beings." We humbly submit, that mortal legislators cannot more effectually degrade a holy ordinance of God, than by forcing persons outwardly to observe it, who are known, from their own professions, not inwardly to revere it. We hope not to see marriage in this country generally separated from a religious observance; and the Bishop knows, that the Act does not create any obstacle to such an observance, but on the contrary, affords all possible liberty and facility to those who sincerely desire it, or have not even such a reluctance to it as they are willing openly to avow. This, we presume to think, is all that human legislators can be justified in doing. They can have no right to enforce a mockery of any real or supposed divine ordinance, as a necessary step to the enjoyment of civil rights.

## PARADISE—WHAT, AND WHERE, IS IT?

JESUS said to the penitent robber on the cross, “ To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Here the term *Paradise* evidently stands for the place, or state, into which the soul of Christ and of his disciple were about to enter immediately, or very shortly after death. It was originally a Persian word, and designated those sumptuous and extensive gardens, or pleasure grounds, in which the monarchs or grandees of the East sought to bring together all kinds of delights. Hence the term was applied by the Greek translators of the Old Testament to the garden of Eden, and thence again had been transferred, before the time of Christ, to the invisible abode of happy souls after death. In this sense it is employed in the passage above quoted. Whether it be also applied to the state of happiness after the resurrection, is not so clear. It is used in two other places of the New Testament. In one, (*2 Cor. xii, 4.*) Paul informs the Corinthians, that on one occasion, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, he had been transported into *Paradise*, where he had heard unutterable things. Some think that *Paradise*, in this passage, is the same place which two verses before is designated as “ the third heaven,” but it appears to me more probable that the apostle did not intend to be so understood, and that the third heaven and *Paradise* are here spoken of as distinct places. But what precise place the term here refers to, there is nothing in the passage itself to determine. The only other passage where *Paradise* is mentioned is in the *Apocalypse*, (*ii. 7.*) Christ is there represented as saying, “ to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the *Paradise* of my God.” This may certainly be very well applied to the state immediately after death: but on comparing this passage with *Apoc. xxii. v, 2.* we find the tree of life assigned to the state of happiness succeeding the general resurrection, which may seem to carry the former passage to that state also. On the whole, therefore, the term *Paradise* may perhaps be applied to the state or place of the happy dead, both before the resurrection and after.

In its more certain and common use, however, I apprehend that the name of *Paradise* especially indicates the

place, or state, in which happy souls are found immediately after death, and it is in this sense that I wish at present to understand it, and to pursue the enquiry, What and where is Paradise? It is a deeply interesting enquiry, in reference both to ourselves and our friends; and although we cannot expect it to lead either to clear conceptions or very certain knowledge, still if but a few glimpses of real truth on such a subject can be obtained, we shall feel that they are of the greatest value.

On the state of the dead *before the resurrection*, we know that opinions have been very much divided. The majority of Christians have been accustomed to assign to them so high a state of glory and bliss, as scarcely to leave anything for the resurrection to add to it. Others have thought it more probable that during this intermediate period, all the dead lie in a state of unconscious repose. Admitting the improbability of the former opinion, it may also be suggested that the Scripture is hardly compatible with the latter. Without attempting to collect all the testimonies that might be adduced, we may observe that the above quoted words of Christ on the cross, do certainly apply better to a state of some conscious happiness, than to one of insensibility. But the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, in which while Jesus speaks agreeably to prevailing ideas, he at the same time gives them, in their leading points, an implied sanction, is to the same effect much more unequivocally. The rich man's intercession for his still living brethren fixes the time of the whole scene, and obliges us to regard it as prior to the resurrection; that is, as descriptive of conscious happiness and woe in the intermediate state. One further testimony, not less determinate, is found in the first Epistle of Peter, where he describes the descent of Jesus after his death, to preach to the imprisoned spirits of the antediluvians. We know how these testimonies are disposed of by such as take other views, but I must own that to my own mind they leave no doubt as to the views of those by whom they were written. And I would ask, why should we wish to subvert a conclusion which is so naturally consolatory and pleasing to all hearts, allowing us to believe in the present happiness of the virtuous dead, while it opens a space for repentance to the wicked, before the awful judgment of the great day?

Suppose, then, that we acquiesce in the common opinion, that the present state of the dead is not one entirely of unconscious repose, but of more or less of conscious happiness or woe. Further questions then arise? And first, what is their relation to the body? Are they absolutely and perfectly withdrawn from it, or do they still retain any connexion with it? The answer to these questions cannot fail to be affected by the views which we entertain of the resurrection of the body itself. For it is very unreasonable to think, that the spirit can at any time be totally and absolutely disconnected from any such part of the body as it is ever again to be in union with. Man from his birth is an entire and single being, uniting in himself a material and spiritual principle, and it is every way reasonable to think, that such he will continue throughout. The scriptural doctrine of the resurrection appears perfectly to agree with this. The apostle illustrates it by the case of a seed; observing, that as in that the body which shall rise is not the same as that sown, though it proceeds from it, so will it be also in the resurrection. All that we can infer is, that some germ, some principle, of our future spiritual bodies, is contained in our present natural ones, which by the cherishing spirit of God shall be developed in the grave, or in *hades*, and in due time be perfected by the resurrection. But that from this vital germ the spirit is ever separated, there appears no reason to surmise. It is far more reasonable to believe, that all of man which is to live remains indissolubly united in one individual being.

To this intermediate, imperfect state, in which the human soul seems but an embryo of what it is to be, it is impossible not to apply the illustration which is found in the successive metamorphoses of the insect tribes, which indeed we can hardly help regarding as expressly provided by the Creator, to assist our feeble conceptions and faltering faith. Is not the chrysalis a very emblem of that middle state in which the soul reposes in comparative inactivity, divested of its organs of communication with the surrounding world? And is not the joyous and radiant butterfly a type of its emancipation at the resurrection, prepared in all the richness of its renovated structure, to launch forth in activity and bliss, and to float and revel in the fields of æther?

The point that remains to be considered, is the probable place of the departed.

Where is Paradise? Where are the souls of our fathers and our friends? Some have thought that the souls of the dead are in a state so purely spiritual, that no particular locality can be supposed to belong to them. But probably this is refining too far, and it may well be doubted whether any created being be of such a description. But waiving the consideration of the possible abstraction of pure spirits, if such things there be, we have to remember that such is not, as far as we know, the state of man in any stage of his existence. Philosophy and mysticism have indeed speculated much of such a state; but it is a grand peculiarity of the Christian religion, and one of its most original points of doctrine, to assign to man in the future life, as well as the present, something of the nature of a bodily tabernacle. "The state of separate spirits," is a topic familiar enough to us, in books of divinity, but it is not in the Scripture that we shall obtain any information about it. Since, then, we have reason to think that the spirit of man never becomes wholly and absolutely disconnected with the material principle, at least with that germ which is to be developed into his spiritual body at the resurrection, we are led to the conclusion, both that the soul has after death some certain place of existence, and likewise that that place must be identical with that of the rudiments of its destined spiritual body. It is, therefore, to the place or abode of this last, that our enquiry at length conducts us.

As the Christian religion informs us that the new or spiritual body will derive its rudiments from the present body, somewhat according to the analogy of the plant and the seed, it has been natural to think of the former as associated in locality with the mouldering remains of the latter. And agreeably to this, the doctrine of the resurrection evidently contemplates mankind as being brought again *from their graves, or some place beneath the ground.* This is too evident to need proof; but a single passage will illustrate it fully. "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." Agreeably to the same notion, *Hades*, or the abode of the dead, both in Scripture and in classical authors, is imagined

as lying in some subterranean region. So David is said by Peter, not to have yet ascended into the heaven : and Jesus by Paul to have descended into the lower parts of the earth, previously to his ascension. He says himself to Mary, “ Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” By the ancients the whole realm of the dead, including the Elysium and the Tartarus, answerable to the Paradise and Gehenna of Scripture, was represented as subterranean. And Christ’s parable of the rich man and Lazarus, evidently represents both the happy and miserable souls as inhabiting one general region, though with a gulph of separation between their particular abodes. And I believe that whoever will take the pains to enquire into the matter, will find that the notion of the souls of the pious going immediately *up to heaven*, is one which does not occur in Scripture. They are represented as going into Paradise or to Abraham’s bosom : that is, to the appropriate region of the happy dead : but this is not saying that they go to *heaven*, and proof has been offered that the ancients actually regarded Paradise and Heaven as different places.

The realm of the dead, including the abodes both of the blest and the unhappy, both Paradise and Gehenna, would therefore appear to be represented as well in Scripture as by ancient writers in general, as occupying some subterranean region. In what measure such a view has a foundation in real truth, it is not, perhaps, possible to determine. This is a subject of profound and inscrutable mystery, and the more our minds endeavor to drag it forth from its native obscurity, and invest it with clear and palpable conceptions, the more it baffles and evades us by its intrinsic subtlety. But supposing that we acquiesce in the ancient and scriptural notion, that the realm of the departed, *so far as it has any natural locality*, is in or about the earth : (and certainly it will not be easy on reflexion to assign to it any more probable situation ; for what do we gain by carrying our views to any of the other globes interminably scattered around us, rather than to our own ?) acquiescing, I say, in the ancient notion, let us not imagine any thing unsuitable or gloomy in the supposed situation of the dead. Though *naturally* or *bodily* reposing in the earth, awaiting the resurrection, yet in spirit, in whatever of consciousness awakes within them in that intermediate state, they may be present with God, with Christ, and other happy

souls. Even their natural situation may to such sense as they may be then endowed with, be full of glory, beauty, and comfort;

Solemque suum, sua sidera, norunt.

It may be thought of by us as dark, and cheerless, and confined; we may wish to remove them in fancy from subterranean realms to the fields of æther. But all such apprehensions are relative merely to our present senses, which no more enable us to judge of a spiritual state, than a blind man's enable him to judge of lights and colors.

But after all, it is very probable that the representation of the revival of the dead under the notion of a resurrection from the grave, is wholly figurative, and incidentally derived from the ordinary circumstance of the deposition of the body in the ground by burial. As we ordinarily see the last of man in conveying him to that long home, it is natural for us to regard him as remaining there, and to expect his restoration from the same quarter. Nevertheless, the living part may soon be entirely disengaged from the mortal remains, may be drawn to some place or sphere proper to its altered nature, and whether that place be in earth, or air, or surrounding æther, the final restoration and remanifestation of the man, may still not unsuitably be called a resurrection. If this view be more congenial to our feelings, there seems to be no reason why we should not entertain it. To me it seems at least as probable as any other.

Wherever Paradise be, let us think of it as the region of the happy dead, where either they enjoy a deep and tranquil repose, sustained by the arms, and blest by the smile of that Omnipotence which is preparing for them the awakening of a joyful resurrection; or in spirit they wake already;—wake to the consciousness of their Father's love, to the communion of Christ and kindred souls, to consolatory and edifying recollections, and anticipations of coming glory; perhaps to such foretastes of it as give them a present sense of unspeakable joy. “There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.”

O blissful scenes! O'er life's beclouded waves  
How do your glories cast a cheering ray!  
Fixed you remain, though fierce the tempest raves,  
A rest secure, where pleasures ne'er decay.

## ON THE SUPPOSED DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST.

*Concluded from page 125.*

We proceed to submit some further observations on the character of our honored Master.

Our knowledge of this character must be derived from the Scriptures. There it is incidentally unfolded, and renewed study will but enable us to discover new graces in it. Far from being ostentatiously set forth; far from being elaborately painted, or blazoned, as virtues sometimes are, to catch the public eye and to give voice to public applause, the virtues of our spiritual Leader—our beneficent Instructor, if not concealed, are scarcely brought to light by his biographers, who with the genuine simplicity of nature and of truth, give us the facts which came under their knowledge or were supplied on the best authority, and scarcely allow themselves the privilege of remarking upon them, and particularly, of calling the attention to any trait of excellence evinced by their amiable and revered friend and master. We derive in this respect a great advantage from the frequent perusal of the Scriptures. Many motives there are, indeed, which urge us to give them redoubled attention. The grace of God as it is revealed in the whole economy of the gospel, the benign aspect under which He appears to his creatures, the promises He gives to the pious and faithful of his rational family, the hopes He plants in their bosom, the consolation He imparts, the balm He pours into the wounds made on their peace—these appear on the pages of God's revealed will: but were it possible that we felt little interest in their perusal, that interest might receive some addition from the grateful task of tracing through all the circumstances of his benevolent life the feelings and resolves by which our honored Lord was actuated, and of collecting from various points the elements of moral beauty, to the formation of a character, symmetrical, perfect, truly excellent and admirable.

How enlightened was the zeal of Jesus! It was a zeal unto knowledge—a zeal that never relaxed but burnt in his breast with a pure and steady flame, so long as he continued to tread the path of mortality. We do not observe him, at one time sitting with folded hands, inactive and desponding; at another, rushing with needless eager-

ness into action, and with rash daring and impetuosity into danger. Far from it. There was an evenness in his exertions, indicating the regularity of his zeal, and shown in the instant performance of every duty which called for his attention. If an opportunity presented itself of conveying useful instruction he was ready to impart it. If the sick and the wretched presented themselves to his sight, and requested his sympathy and aid, he was prepared to grant them. If vice and hypocrisy wore their disguise in his presence, or modest merit stood before him, he gave to each its true character, and instantly reproved or applauded. And whilst the moments allowed for the accomplishment of the divine purposes flowed swiftly away, he was intent upon improving each of them by converting his brethren, and leading them, a reformed and righteous band, to the presence of their Father, and to the happiness of heaven.

His faithfulness vied with his zeal. They were, in fact, the same. Constantly animated by a sense of duty, and as constantly by an inextinguishable ardour, he left no part of his great undertaking unaccomplished. In the highest degree faithful to God, he was equally faithful to man. He kept back nothing that was profitable—nothing that was valuable to those he instructed, but declared to them the whole will of God ; placed in an encouraging light the mercies of the Lord, gave their real character to his terrors, and by the repetition of the wisest precepts and the justest principles of conduct, afforded every assistance his disciples could wish to receive, in prosecuting the high purposes of their existence on earth.

Of his benevolence can we speak too much ? or do more than justice to that affection for his brethren of mankind, which was not a transient feeling of his heart, but a continual, abiding, and active principle ? Who shall say that the high behests of heaven were not faithfully fulfilled by Jesus, partly because he loved with fraternal affection the many to whom he was sent ? The assertion would meet a contradiction on every page of the New Testament. Our Lord's benevolence is manifested in his every action, in his every word—not the less so when he is reproving the vicious and exposing the hypocrite, than when he is admiring with a kindred feeling the virtues of

humanity. It is manifest in his tender regard for the suffering and the dying; and it is illustriously manifest in his enduring excruciating sufferings in his own person, and sealing his mission with his life.

And what shall we say of his piety? That piety which chastened his heart and rendered him so eminently deserving of the approbation and favor of heaven! That piety which made the most difficult labors and appalling trials as nothing to him; which was a shield against the dangers of the wilderness and the inclemencies of the midnight hour; which forsook him not in the moment of his deepest distress and agony, and beamed with majestic beauty from his eyes when they closed upon the world at Calvary? The piety which was the crowning grace of our Lord's character, the jewel of his diadem, will be understood and appreciated rather by contemplation than description. It is not in the power of words fully to do it justice. Its worth will be felt by the pious mind.

Thus it was that Jesus left us an example that we should follow in his steps. Those steps lead to great and ever-during happiness; and truly may we bless God that we are not mocked with an exhibition of unattainable excellence to make us more sensible of our weakness, and to embitter the disappointment of our failure. The virtues we have imperfectly described are human virtues. And we are required as the disciples of Jesus Christ and the candidates for immortal felicity to cultivate them with all faithfulness. If rash hope encourages sloth, and allies itself to a faith in the divine acceptance which is not founded on obedience, let us banish it far from our breasts, remembering the exhortation of our Master, and cherishing only that hope which maketh not ashamed, which owes its birth to the humble attempt to gain by diligence the merciful notice and favor of God. Let us look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, be like minded with him, and contemplate the excellence and holiness of his character till we make them our own, and till we appear in that state of goodness, to which the instruction and the example of Jesus were intended to lead us.

W.

## GOD'S PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF OUR NATURE.

THE general truth, that “ God knoweth our frame,” is one that cannot be reflected on without opening to the contemplation of our minds the loftiest and most interesting views. Taken, as it may be, to imply God’s perfect knowledge of human nature, in all its most hidden powers and properties, both physical and spiritual, the mysteries of our life in the body, the moral capabilities of our souls, all the greatness and all the littleness of human nature, (for it *is* little or great, according to the objects with which it is compared, or the aspect in which it is viewed,) considered as implying God’s perfect knowledge of all that is in man, as an intellectual, social, and moral, as well as a merely living creature,—the truth that “ he knoweth our frame,” is a most sublime truth. It inspires exalted conceptions of the wisdom and greatness of God himself; and no less does it inspire pleasing and consoling thoughts, mingled however with some very solemn thoughts, of our dependent and responsible relations to God.

In order that we may better judge of the true greatness of this prerogative of God, let us consider, as far as our degree of knowledge will enable us, what it is to know perfectly the constitution of human nature. How little do we know of our own nature, after thousands of years of accumulated observation and experience, and the deeply penetrating studies of some of the most powerful of human intellects! And yet, with what intense wonder and admiration does our little knowledge inspire us! Even David, contemplating his own bodily frame, could see that he was “ fearfully and wonderfully made;” and in his admiration of God’s wisdom was led to exclaim, “ Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Nevertheless, it is certain that the devout king of Israel, in his days of comparative ignorance, could not have known half so much as we know respecting the wonders of human life. And even we do not know half so much as we are conscious there is to be known, concerning our bodies and our souls. This knowledge, also, seems too high for us; we cannot attain unto it, except by slow degrees and imper-

fect measures. We go on, it is true, from age to age gathering more and more of this very useful and gratifying kind of knowledge;— and every step we make increases our acquaintance with the evidences of Divine Wisdom. In the present day, circumstances have occurred which have set to work some of the ablest minds of our country and generation upon this interesting department of natural theology. Great are the treasures of knowledge, both new and old, which they have brought forth to public view. More clearly than ever is it now evinced, that the power wisdom and goodness of God are manifest in the constitution of human nature. Not the less true, however, is it still, that there are mysteries even here; in our bodily frame, in the life we live in the flesh, there are some secrets which we cannot reach,—which lie beyond the present boundaries, perhaps beyond the utmost possible boundaries, of our knowledge upon earth, as within a dark, impenetrable region, which man cannot tread and live. But God knoweth it all,—all that we know, and all which we cannot discover,—knoweth it, not as we do, through a long and painful inquiry, but directly, perfectly, as the essential, unchangeable possession of his own eternal mind. Surely this must give us high and solemn thoughts of His greatness?

But our conceptions of this subject are vastly enlarged, when we turn from the mere bodily organization of man, to consider the marvels of his intellectual and moral nature. If there are secrets which we cannot penetrate, even in our outward frame, and the animal life to which it is subservient,—what shall we say of our spirits? What is that rational mind in which we make our boast? How shall we define it? Where is the seat of its abode? How does it begin, how does it keep, how does it terminate its mysterious union with the body? Through what strange medium is it affected in such various ways by external and material objects? What is the principle on which its perfect identity depends, of which we are so fully conscious, amidst the hourly changes, the perpetual transmutations and gradual decay, of our bodily system? How are its separate faculties developed and preserved, with so much distinctness in their respective operations, and yet with so much harmony in their combined workings;—with

such endless variety in individual men, and yet with such a perfect sameness in the race at large ? How are its treasures of thought and wisdom laid up, with so much order, in the store-house of memory ? These are subjects of inquiry which have, in all ages of the world, engaged the most earnest, but too often the fruitless studies, of some of the wisest of mankind. It is far from our intention to represent that we know *nothing* upon these subjects. We know a vast deal indeed, if it be measured either by its practical usefulness, or by the proportion it bears to our limited powers of observation. And yet it may be safely affirmed, that they who know most, have the profoundest sense of the remaining ignorance and darkness of the human mind respecting itself, its own essence, constitution, faculties, and proceedings. But the God who made us, the Father of our spirits, knoweth it all perfectly. There is nothing in the most subtle properties, in the most secret operations of our souls, that is not as thoroughly open and naked to his view,—and infinitely more so,—than to our own minds is the simplest object with which our senses are familiar. He sees the mind of man itself, he sees all that passes in its most hidden chambers, in a manner which is but faintly illustrated by the sight *we* have of any object that our eyes immediately rest upon. In short, there is nothing, original or acquired, in the spiritual, invisible parts of human nature, but lo ! He knoweth it altogether.

Such are our convictions as Christian Theists, respecting the perfect knowledge of God, both as to our bodily frame, and as to our far nobler mental constitution. It may not be uninstructive to compare our conviction for a moment with the absurd notions of the Atheist on this subject. The Atheist must admit, and will admit, as readily as we, that man cannot find out himself unto perfection :—that in fact we know only the conscious results of our nature, and are altogether unacquainted with the essential causes of life, and thought, and feeling, even in ourselves. This is a fact too evident to be denied. But the strange, the revolting hypothesis of the Atheist is, that what we do not know, is not known by any mind in existence. It is clear to all, that there are some principles at work, some causes in operation, producing effects so vast, so regular, so beautiful, so felicitous, in short, (to speak in the most cautious

terms,) so exceedingly like the effects of wise and benevolent design, as to fill us with the highest admiration. That we cannot at present comprehend the nature of these secret sources of life and thought, is very certain. That, in this our mortal condition at least, we never shall comprehend them, is very probable. But that they are not known, that there exists no intelligent Being by whom they are comprehended, is surely a monstrous doctrine. It is difficult for the understanding and gloomy for the heart, to believe that there is no mind in the universe by whom the nature of man's body and soul is at all better known than it is by himself. This conclusion of Atheism displays its absurdity in a very striking light.

But leaving these reflections on what is false, and holding fast our faith in what is true, let us consider one of the plainest consequences of this truth. It is indeed full of edifying, warning, and consolatory consequences :—but we shall mention only one. We may infer from it the reasonableness of a steadfast belief in the perfect wisdom and equity of *the moral law* which God has given for the guidance of our lives. He that knoweth our frame, as well as all things else, must know infallibly what law is best fitted for our government, as moral and responsible beings. All the wants and weaknesses, all the powers and capabilities of our nature, are unveiled before him. He knows how far this perishable body is a necessary instrument for unfolding the mental and moral faculties of our nature ;—and how far by its fleshly infirmities it acts upon the soul's growth and freedom. He knows what is within and what is beyond the limits of our moral capacity, strengthened by whatever degree of grace and assistance he himself may be pleased to vouchsafe. On this account we may cherish the most unreserved confidence in the perfect wisdom and justice of all God's moral laws and requirements. We may be very sure that he does not demand of us any measure of obedience beyond our power, any degrees of virtue and piety unsuitable to the state in which he has placed us, any attainments, any sacrifices, which are not conducive to our final happiness. When we men attempt to give laws to one another, we err in a thousand different ways, through ignorance and prejudice. But God cannot err, for he knoweth every secret spring and source of

action within us ; and he knows the exact influence of all outward and inward temptations. We need not fear, therefore, that he ever has, or ever will exact from us, a righteousness that exceeds our natural means of obedience; or if he does, he will assuredly give us more than natural means to comply with his will. He has not doomed us, for the transgressions of our first progenitor, to a condition of total moral corruption and inability to fulfil his law, and then, for this natural incompetency, condemned us to everlasting woe. There are notions of this kind prevalent in the world, but they cannot be true ; for " God knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust," and he does not require of us, on pain of eternal condemnation, what he knows we are incapable of performing. We may rely on the perfect equity and perfect wisdom of his laws. Only let us satisfy ourselves, from reason or from revelation, that any practice, or the cultivation of any habit or affection, is agreeable to His will, and we may safely devote ourselves to the work with all the zeal and ardour of which our souls are capable.

CHRISTIANUS.

#### OBLIGATIONS OF THE WISE AND LIBERAL AMONGST THE PROFESSORS OF RELIGION.

(*From Dewey's Journal.*)

[The following remarks, quoted from a popular book mentioned in the note below, most truly describe the present relative position, and the obligations, of the more enlightened portion of the religious public, equally in our country as in America. This timid silence and acquiescence of men, belonging to almost every denomination, who are fully sensible of the religious follies of the day, and might effectually check them, is an evil which we constantly see occasion to lament. If all the wisdom and good sense, all the moderation and liberality, which one

" The Old World and the New ; or, a Journal of Reflections and Observations made on a Tour in Europe. By the Rev. Orville Dewey, late of New Bedford, U. S. In two volumes. London : Charles Fox, 67, Paternoster Row. 1836."

knows to exist concerning religion, were to have bold and honest utterance given to it, fanaticism would not long be able to carry its head so highly.] ED.

"It is a fact which can have escaped none but the dullest observer, that throughout our whole country, and in every particular sect, the most cultivated and intelligent minds are generally the most liberal minds. They are the most liberal with regard to the comparative unimportance of the differences of religious opinion—the most liberal in the extension of their charity to differing sects—the most liberal, without being guilty of undue license, in their reading, their conversation, their habits, and manners; the most liberal in the construction they put upon what are to be considered as lawful and proper recreations. It is well-known that there is such a class of persons in every religious denomination, who look with distrust or dislike upon all the extravagant religious measures and projects, and the fanatical opinions, that prevail around them.

"Now what is the position which this class of persons occupies in the religious community? It is actually an isolated position. It is constructively a position of subserviency. They exert no influence, they take no part, against those things of which they disapprove. They seek to pass quietly through the world. They take care to offend as little as possible, the religious prejudices of their times. They give up to these prejudices a part of their liberty; they use another part of it, as privately and obtrusively as they can. They think that many things around them are wrong; nay, there are not a few among them, who sometimes express a great dread of the effects of the popular fanaticism; but they say as little, they do as little as possible, openly to withstand this sweeping tide of popular opinions and practices.

"So far I conceive they are wrong on their part. But then they are treated in a manner still more wrong. They are never consulted by the religious communities around them. Upon the very points where their advice is most needed—upon questions of doubtful religious wisdom and propriety, all resort to them is especially avoided. Thus, the influence of not a few of the best minds in the religious

community, and many of them interested in religion too, is completely lost. They do not like to intrude their opinion unasked—they do not like to go and speak in public meetings when they are not called. They are *not* called, their opinion is *not* asked; and they but too naturally fold their arms—look on—criticise with their friends the bad measures or the bad manners of the zealots—lament, by their fireside, that religion is to suffer so much from the moroseness and folly of its professed friends—and think that this is *all* they have to do.

“Can society well and safely go on, without all the light that is in it? Can it, without danger, exclude from among its guiding lights the best minds that are in it? Why, there is enough of sober and cultivated thought among us, if it could be gathered from its various religious circles into one mass of public opinion, if it could be induced to speak out—there is enough, I say, to hold in complete check all the religious extravagance, fanaticism, and asperity of the country. There is a body of men that can *produce* that state of modified and mitigated religious opinion and action, which they profess to desire. How is it to be thought strange that some parts of the country are overrun with fanaticism, if religion has been given into the hands of the most ignorant portion of the people? Shall we be told that it is an unpleasant thing to come out, and to be brow-beaten by the multitude, to be rudely assailed as the enemies of religion and of God, and, perhaps, to sacrifice all chances of social and political advancement? Then, I say, let an unpleasant thing be done. Is the religion, that has been sealed in the blood of the martyrs, to demand no sacrifices of us? Nay, I say again, if martyrdom be yet required in fidelity to this benign and abused faith—then let there be martyrdoms!

“But there are no martyrdoms required. There is nothing needed but that some true, liberal, kind words be spoken—frankly and freely spoken, by every reflecting man as he sees occasion; that he shrink not ignobly from his responsibility, and his place in society, but speak plainly what he thinks of religion and religious measures, and religious men; and in America, I verily believe, is a people that will hear. Many a plain, uneducated, modest man, I am persuaded, is waiting to hear that word, from

those to whom he looks up as having advantages superior to his own. Ours is a country that is wide awake to improvement, Our advancing systems of education, our improving prison and penitentiary discipline, our progress in religious sentiment, (I mean the progress of all sects,) our increasing charitable institutions, our temperance reform, all show it. The country, I repeat, is wide awake to improvement. Are the authorised pioneers of this improvement seeking to lose themselves in the crowd?"—

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### THE RUINS OF OAKHAMPTON CASTLE.

WHERE old Oakhampton's ruin'd Keep  
Nods o'er the Ockment wild and lone—  
Where Valour, Power, and Beauty sleep  
In the dark night of ages gone,—  
Oh, wanderer, seek that moss-grown heap,  
And dream the deeds that once were done!

Where murmurs now the blue wood-dove,  
And owlets hoot their midnight round—  
Where ivy waves the walls above,  
And rank weeds clothe the lonely mound,—  
There, harpers sang of war and love,  
In halls with banner'd trophies crown'd.

There shiver'd many a knightly lance  
In gallant sport or headlong fray;  
And ladies sped the melting glance,  
That could so well such toils repay;  
And princely feast and stately dance  
Full swiftly wiled the eve away!—

So ran the course of early thought,  
When early thought was least confin'd,

While fancy with full witchery wrought  
 Upon the unreluctant mind,  
 Ere Truth her lessons stern had taught,  
 And couch'd the eye with splendour blind.

How alter'd now the glance I cast  
 On yonder legendary pile !  
 The crimes and errors of the Past  
 Vanish not now in Fancy's smile :  
 The ivy, rustling in the blast,  
 Tells of judicial fate the while.

The days of ancient pride were not  
 What young romance so loves to paint :  
 Far from each future nation's lot  
 Be lord and vassal, serf and saint !  
 Happier the goatherd's turf-built cot,  
 Than all of feudal rare and quaint !

Who would compare the lowliest swain,  
 That earns his bread by sweat of brow,  
 With the poor serf, who wore the chain,  
 Forced to his liege-lord's will to bow,  
 Yet scorn'd and spurn'd, as if his vein  
 Ran not with human blood as now ?

Who would make man again to man  
 The lordly falcon and his prey ?  
 Enough, that Time's great river ran  
 Redly and foully yesterday :  
 A purer course this morn began—  
 Sweep, with thy stains, dark Past, away !

Ye mouldering heaps, had verse of mine  
A magic to arrest your fall,  
The stars should gleam, the sun should shine,  
For ages yet on each gray wall,  
And sage's scroll, or poet's line,  
Have less of power or charm for all.

'Sermons in stones?" Aye, preach ye there,  
Silent, and beautiful, and dim!  
Long list, upon the starlight air,  
Wild Ockment's solitary hymn!  
Long to the passer-by declare  
How soon Pride's cup o'er-flows the brim!

I would not such things had not been,  
To tell the tale of former times:  
They solemnize full many a scene,  
Once darken'd by baronial crimes;  
And ruin'd Holds, with ivy green,  
Might moralize an ideot's rhymes.

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## THE AGED SOLOMON.

*A Talmudic Tale.*

LUXURY, riches, and ambition, perverted the ripened manhood of Solonion: He forgot wisdom, the pride of his youth, and his heart became lost in the vortex of frivolous dissipation and wicked folly.

Once as he was walking in his splendid gardens, he heard the conversation of the manifold creatures around him; for he understood the language of beast and of bird, of tree, stone, and shrub: He turned his ear and he listened.

"Behold" said the lily, "there goes the king; he passes me in his pride, whilst I, in my humility, am robed more splendidly than he."

And the palm tree waved its boughs, and said, "There he goes, the oppressor of his country; and yet his vile

flatterers, in their fulsome songs, presume to compare him to me. But where are his boughs ? where the fruit with which he gladdens the hearts of men ?"

He went on, and heard the nightingale sing to her beloved : " As we love each other, Solomon loveth not—O, not one of his sultanas holds him dear as I do thee, my dearest !"

And the turtle-dove cooed to her mate : " Not one of his thousand wives would grieve for his loss, as I would for thine, my only beloved."

The enraged monarch hastened his pace, and he came to the nest where the stork was teaching her young to launch forth on the adventurous flight. " What I do for you," said the stork to its brood, " king Solomon does not do for his son Rehoboam. He does not teach and exhort him : Therefore, the young prince will not thrive. Strangers will lord it over his father's domains."

The king withdrew to his secret closet ; Musing, he sat there in silent grief.

As he there sat, sunk in painful reflections, the bride of his youthful years, Wisdom, stood invisible before him, and touched his eyelids. He fell into a deep sleep, and had a mournful vision. He saw the deputation of the tribes as they stood before his haughty son. He saw his empire divided through the silly answer of the foolish boy. He saw ten of the tribes he had oppressed rebel, and place a stranger on their throne. He saw his palaces in ruins ; his gardens rooted up ; the city destroyed ; the temple of the Lord in ashes. Suddenly he awoke from his sleep, and terror seized on his tremulous mind.

When lo ! once more the bride of his youth, the guardian of his early career, stood visibly before him. Tears owed from her eyes. She spoke : " Thou hast seen what hereafter will happen. Thou alone art the first cause of all these calamities. But it is not in thy power to recal or to alter the past ; for thou canst not bid the river to flow back to its springs, nor the years of thy youth to return. Thy soul is wearied, thy heart is exhausted, and I, the forsaken of thy youth, can no more be thy companion in the land of terrestrial life."

With pity in her looks, she vanished ; and Solomon, who had crowned his youthful days with roses, wrote in his old age a book on the vanity of all human affairs on earth.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF THE  
REV. RICHARD WRIGHT.

*Concluded from page 138.*

In the year 1806 the Unitarian Fund was established, and Mr. Wright was engaged as one of its Missionaries; although he retained the situation of minister of the Congregation at Wisbeach until the year 1810. During these four years he travelled about 2000 miles a year, in the service of the Fund. When he was not absent from Wisbeach more than two three Sundays, his place was generally supplied by some member of his congregation; but when he made longer journies, the Committee of the Fund sent a minister to preach for him. His journies, as we have already observed, were generally performed on foot; and often would he assemble a congregation and preach to them in the evening, after walking 20 or 30 miles in the course of the day. In the year 1810 he was solicited, by the Cominittee of the Unitarian Fund, to resign his situation as minister at Wisbeach, in order to devote himself entirely to the work of a missionary. With the consent of his congregation, he did so. While this plan was in contemplation, being on a journey, he called on an old friend, a reputed orthodox minister, and in the course of conversation mentioned that he was about to resign his situation at Wisbeach, and to act entirely upon the plans of the Unitarian Fund. His aged friend advised him *not* to do this. "After a few years," said he, "you will be old, and not able to travel as a missionary, and what will you do then? If you keep your situation in Wisbeach, the people there are too much attached to you to wish you to resign when you become old and infirm: you will be sure of a provision in your old age." Mr. Wright's reply was, "About what you mention I have no concern; my concern is to do what I think most right, what appears to me to be my duty; the rest is God's concern. And if I do what appears to me to be most right, what I think to be my duty, he will take care of and provide for me in my old age." On reviewing these circumstances at the age of 60, he says, "on this principle I have always acted, and have never seen cause to regret that I have done so, nor do I fear that I shall ever have cause to repent it. God can never fail those who put their trust in him."

From 1810 untill 1822 Mr W. was engaged as a per-

petual missionary. During this time he laboured in 33 different counties in England ; he made four missionary journeys into Scotland and three into Wales. " My first mission to Scotland" he observes " appeared to me an undertaking of greater difficulty, magnitude and importance, than any one in which I had previously engaged ; and I prepared myself in the best way I was able. There was but one person in Scotland whom I had ever seen ; and I found him on a sick bed, from which he never rose ; but died shortly after. There was then but one congregation in Scotland which was strictly Unitarian ; the congregation at Dundee." During each of his journeys in Scotland he travelled nearly nine hundred miles.

It may be acceptable to our readers if we give some further account of Mr. Wright's missionary labours in the West of England particularly. He visited the West, we believe, three times, at intervals of several years ; and on all these occasions, he preached in most of the towns of the western counties in which there were Unitarian congregations, and always his presence had the effect of strengthening the zeal of, at least, the more simple hearted friends of the cause. But it was in Cornwall that his labours were chiefly employed.

" I first visited Cornwall in the year 1811. The chief object of this journey was to collect information, to ascertain how far future missions among the Cornish people would be likely to prove successful, and what plans would be best calculated to establish the Unitarian cause in that county. I wanted to form an estimate of the general state of the mass of the people, in particular the state of religious opinions and feelings among them, how far they were likely to pay attention to Unitarian preaching, and to find some important station where the Unitarian standard might be erected with success. During the journey I preached in a few places, had many hearers, and succeeded in the objects I had in view to the utmost of my expectation. Some important effects resulted from my visit at Falmouth and Flushing ; in which places I conceived an Unitarian society might before any long time be established."

" In the year 1815 I again visited and spent twenty-eight days in Cornwall ; when I had Mr. Cooper, a young minister who had just finished his studies, for my assistant in the mission. This was a most laborious journey ; but it was attended with considerable success. I preached thirty-seven times, besides engaging in other labors, and in nineteen different places, in most of them in the open air, and frequently to very large congregations ; and distributed a great many tracts. The largest congregation during this journey, was estimated at fifteen or sixteen hundred people. We were frequently engaged in conversation and debate, not only with different persons in the places

we visited, but also with others whom we met with on the road in travelling from place to place. After I had completed this journey I addressed a letter to the Unitarians in Cornwall, which was published in the *Christian Reformer*.

"My last missionary journey in Cornwall was performed in the year 1819; when I labored there incessantly about seven weeks; during which time I preached in seventeen different places, delivered fifty discourses, and had a great deal of conversation with different persons and parties. As usual in this district, in most of the places I had to preach in the open air; the congregations were frequently very large, and generally very attentive: the largest congregation was estimated at two thousand people; but I think there were more than that number. I think I did not distribute less than fifteen hundred tracts; they were generally received and even sought after with great avidity. I wrote an address to the Cornish people, of which I had a thousand copies printed, and distributed most of them. This address was also inserted in the *Christian Reformer*."

Mr. Wright was mainly instrumental in establishing Unitarian congregations in Falmouth and Flushing, where some exceedingly meritorious individuals were found who sacrificed time, interest, and all the means in their power, to promote the cause of divine truth. They have suffered many disappointments and had many trying difficulties to contend with; but we hope they are yet destined to witness the fruits of their righteous perseverance.

For the details of Mr. W's various missionary journeys, we must refer our readers to the "Review" from which most of the above particulars have been selected.

Notwithstanding Mr. W's laborious exertions, in travelling and preaching the gospel, he found time for literary pursuits. His publications are, we believe, nearly a hundred in number; and some of them are volumes which must have required considerable time and labour in preparation.

This brief and very imperfect outline may enable our readers to form some idea of the labours of Mr. Wright, in the cause of Unitarianism. But few are acquainted with the difficulties which he had to contend with, and which he happily surmounted. "I had difficulties," he says, "to encounter, which cannot well fall to the lot of another person acting in the same capacity, especially in the early part of my course. In many places I had entirely new ground to break up, where I knew of no person friendly to the cause in which I was engaged. At that time bigotry was more rampant, and an intolerant spirit more fierce, among some parties of Christians, thanat pre-

sent. The friends of Unitarianism were not so numerous as they have since become ; and missionary plans were too novel, and those who acted upon them too little known, to obtain the countenance of Unitarians generally. The Unitarian Fund not existing, when I commenced the work, there was no public institution to which a missionary could look for countenance and support. The penal laws against Unitarians were then in force ; the discourses I preached, and the tracts I circulated every where, with my name to them, had the laws been executed, would in England have subjected me to confiscation of goods and imprisonment, and in Scotland to an ignominious death."

Yet independent of these difficulties, even in the most favourable circumstances, to undertake the work of a missionary, requires no little zeal and perseverance. To walk alone over parts of the country where he is a stranger; to enter a town where he knows no one, and after a walk of many miles, to have to look out a place to preach in, address a congregation of strangers, and try to obtain, conversation with some of the hearers—this does indeed require some fortitude and presence of mind. Yet this Mr. W. did in countless instances ; nor was he turned from his purpose by an uncourteous reception, or by such unkind treatment as he sometimes received.

In the year 1822, feeling the weakness and infirmities of age coming upon him, and these having doubtless been accelerated by the labour and fatigue he had gone through, he resigned the office of perpetual missionary, and settled as minister of the Unitarian Baptist congregation at Trowbridge. But he says, (Review p. 474) " If I, in some degree, retire from the field while the contest between rationality and mystery, truth and error, the pure gospel and creeds of human device, Christian liberty and superstitious prostration and bondage, still continues, it is in the full confidence that the victory and complete triumph are certain ; and if the enemies of Unitarianism approach my quarters, they shall find me in my armour, and still ready for the contest ; the sword of the spirit shall not fall from my hand while I have strength to wield it : and when the hour which is rapidly approaching shall arrive, that my hand can no longer move, nor my voice articulate, if thought remain, be this my prayer, " Let Jehovah be king

over all the earth ; the one Jehovah, whose name is one." Hallelujah : The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Mr. Wright remained at Trowbridge until the year 1827, when he removed to Kirkstead, in Lincolnshire, where, after a few hours illness, he expired on the 17th of September, 1836.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; yea saith the spirits, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them."

#### LINES ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. R. WRIGHT.

And shall thy voice no more our ears delight ?  
 How weeps my heart for thee—beloved WRIGHT !  
 Seeker of Truth—the man of thinking mind,—  
 Strict in thy life, of disposition kind.  
 Better than pompous stone or painted crest  
 Is thy memorial in the living breast.  
 Enough—till God thy great reward declare,  
 And bid thee 'mong his sons thy portion share.

*Chatham*

A. T. C.

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"A Discourse concerning Creeds, their Origin, Authors, and Effects; preached in the Meeting-House of the first Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, on Sunday, May 8th, 1836. With Reference to the Decision of the Court of Exchequer, in the case respecting the Presbyterian Meeting-House of Clough: and Published at the Request of those who then heard it, and of other Congregations to whom it was subsequently preached. By J. SCOTT PORTER, Second Edition. Belfast: Printed by J. Smyth, High-Street: Sold in London by J. Mardon, 7, Farringdon-Street.

We stated in our last number, (p. 140.) that amongst the *Remonstrants*, or Presbyterian Unitarians, in the north of Ireland, there are men who know well how to defend their characters and their cause. If any of our readers should require evidence of the truth of this assertion, we advise them to obtain and peruse this admirable discourse. The decision given in the Irish Court of Exchequer against the Minister and Trustees of the Meeting-House of Clough,

on account of their adoption of Unitarian sentiments, appears to have produced on the mind of Mr. Porter the effect which we hope to see produced on the minds of all honest Unitarians by all similar proceedings. He was roused by it to a manly, enthusiastic feeling of attachment to the great principles of religious freedom, and to a burning indignation against the tyranny and meanness of sectarian priests. But Mr. Porter, together with this spirit, is happily possessed likewise of the talents which have enabled him to pour its dictates and breathings into the hearts of his brethren. We know of scarcely any thing superior to this discourse, as an exposition of the absurdity and wickedness committed by the imposition of ecclesiastical creeds. We cannot but suppose that, from its intrinsic merits, and from the peculiar circumstances under which it was delivered, it must have produced a great impression and much good. We think the circulation of it in print will be likely to promote the same desirable ends.

Mr. Porter thus speaks of the authors of creeds:—

“ I speak, therefore, in the very spirit of my text (Romans xiv, 4,) when I ask, who are these men, these fabricators and abettors of creeds,—that we should be obliged to bend our necks to the yoke which it may please them to impose? Who are they,—these priests and legislators, who have taken upon them to enact laws and canons for binding the consciences of their brethren;—who and what are they, or what commission can they produce,—that we should be required to submit our souls to their authority in religious concerns,—to receive their interpretation of every passage, on which it may please them to comment,—and to embrace their opinion in every article of faith which it may please them to define? Who are they,—these self-constituted guardians of Orthodoxy, who propound their dogmas to us in this arrogant style,—these dealers in excommunications, curses, and anathemas,—in pains, penalties, and disqualifications; who tell us that unless we think as they think, and profess as they profess, we shall be subjected to numerous ills and inconveniences in the present life, and to exclusion from the mercy of our Heavenly Father in that which is to come;—who are they, and what commission can they produce that we should be compelled to acknowledge their arrogant pretensions, and humbly to bow before the throne of their insolent authority? Where do we find in the New Testament, that Christ has given them a commission to exercise this unlimited control? Is there any passage in which our divine master has either commanded or empowered any of his uninspired followers, whether priests or legislators, to lay down their own opinions as the measure of other men’s minds; to exact from their Christian brethren an undeviating conformity to their standard, and a rigorous adherence to their decisions? Can they produce a single text in which adherence to their human creeds

and confessions is either required, enjoined, or commended? Not one! There is no such passage to be found. They have received no such commission; they are invested with no such authority. Indeed as the compilers of creeds are by no means agreed among themselves, it would have been most strange and suspicious if our Lord had given any such authority. It would necessarily imply that he had commissioned one set of men to establish as articles of faith, doctrines which he had authorized another to condemn as pernicious and damnable heresies. Such an admission would do more to undermine the credibility of the Christian religion, than all the efforts of all the sceptics who have assailed it, since the time when it was first preached."

Having thus disputed the competency of the workmen Mr. Porter next describes the nature of their work:—

"So much respecting the authors of creeds. A few words on creeds themselves. They are, in general, dictated by some temporary alarm engendered by local, and perhaps transitory disputes. To the subjects of these temporary debates, they assign, as is natural enough, an importance far beyond their real magnitude; and give to them a prominence, to which they are by no means entitled in the grand scheme of the Gospel faith. Hence there is not a creed to be found, which does not largely partake of the characteristics of the times to which it owes its origin. They are all encumbered with clauses, expressed in a phraseology, unknown alike to the modern usages of language, and to the scriptures from which they pretend to be extracted. They are all, as might be expected from the circumstances of their birth, at variance with the charity and liberal spirit of the Gospel. Their authors, being heated by recent controversies and inflamed with zeal against those whom they regarded as heretics and schismatics,—have expressed themselves, in many instances, with a bitterness and virulence, which cannot but shock the minds of serious Christians in later times, who can take a more dispassionate review of all the facts of the case, unaffected by animosities, which have in a considerable measure subsided. To the same cause we must refer the assertions of unintelligible, inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory doctrine, with which they frequently abound. Such tenets are always the first to be impugned in the march of reformation; and therefore they are those for which the persons who exercise the authority of the church, are most likely to feel themselves called on to contend. Such dogmas abound in almost every confession of faith: and they usually occupy a much greater share of the writer's space, and the reader's attention than facts of undoubted authority and unquestioned importance. We may find examples of this in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion which form the creed of the church of England: and in the Westminster Confession, which holds the same rank in the church of Scotland. I refer to these as the most generally known of the Protestant symbolic books. In both we find the doctrine, that the two natures, the divine and the human, are for ever united in Christ, asserted with the utmost clearness and the most systematic precision. No man who reads these documents, can have any doubt that this is a tenet which their authors have made necessary to be believed: nor is there any room

for ambiguity left respecting the sense in which they understood it. Now, it will be admitted by all candid theologians, that there is no one passage in sacred scripture in which this doctrine is expressly revealed, or explicitly stated. There is none among the sacred writers, who directly informs us that "two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, are inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion ; which person is very God and very man ; yet one Christ." Those who believe this doctrine, can only receive it, because they think it follows as an inference from some other statements which are found in the New Testament. Certain it is that this is a doctrine which is clearly defined in the creeds, but is not,—to say the very least,—clearly stated in the word of God. On the other hand, these creeds do not contain a single word of those things which make up the sum and substance of the account given of our Lord by the four evangelists ;—the astonishing and at the same time benevolent miracles which he wrought ;—the clear and striking predictions which he delivered ;—the beautiful and instructive parables which he taught ;—the admirable discourses which he pronounced in public ;—the interesting conversations which he held with his disciples and familiar friends, in private ;—and the graces and virtues which his life exemplified. It is evident, therefore, that the authors of the creeds have set forth our Saviour's character in a very different manner from that which the writers of the New Testament judged it most expedient to employ."

#### SOMERSET AND DORSET UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

A very numerous and interesting Meeting of this Society was held at Crewkerne, on Wednesday, 26th October. Eight ministers, and many members and friends from a considerable distance, were present. At both religious Services the Chapel was crowded with highly respectable attendants, and nearly forty gentlemen sat down to dinner at the George Inn.

In the morning the Revds. J. Mitchelson and P. Harwood took the devotional duty, and the Rev. J. Murch preached from Luke vii, v. 22, and eloquently urged upon Ministers the adapting their discourses to the poor and uninformed, and upon all Unitarians zealous attention to the physical, moral, and religious wants of the indigent.

W. F. Cuff, Esq. presided at the meeting for business, and at dinner. After the usual first toasts had been drunk, the Chairman proposed "Health and Prosperity to Unitarian friends of Scotland" "to Unitarian friends of Ireland,"—and "to the zealous promoters of the Unitarian cause in Warwickshire and Lancashire, which called up the Revds. P. Harwood, R. M. Montgomery, and E. Whitfield, who each favored the company with a pleasing and animating account of Unitarianism in the country with which they were severally best acquainted.

The pulpit service of the evening was introduced by the Rev. R. M. Montgomery, and the Rev. P. Harwood preached on the Example of

the Saviour, and offered remarks exceedingly appropriate to the occasion, and adapted to be at all times practically useful.

It is hoped that this meeting will be rendered, through the Divine Blessing, subservient to the spiritual edification of all who were privileged to attend it.

S. W.

The following address for distribution was unanimously adopted :

At the present moment, when the interests of Unitarian Christianity are assailed with equal activity and determination, not only by the avowed enemies of all freedom of enquiry,—the devotees of time-honored error and exclusive privilege,—but by those, who, styling themselves the friends of “Civil and Religious liberty,” are yet the most determined antagonists of freedom of opinion ; it becomes the duty of every friend of religious liberty—every upholder of pure Christianity—to stand forward to *repel the systematic attacks of their opponents* ; and, with a zeal proportionate to the Holy Cause in which they are engaged—with an intrepidity becoming the advocates of views so identified with the well-being and progression of mankind—with an energy and decision of purpose, yet with a mildness of demeanour, suitable to their character as followers of the “meek and lowly Jesus,” to meet the exigences of the times, and demonstrate that they are prepared to stand by the principles which they have espoused, conceiving them to be those most conformable to the dictates of enlightened reason ; most consonant to the “aim and end” of God’s written word ; and best adapted for the extension of human knowledge, the enlargement of the sphere of human happiness, and the more rapid diffusion amongst mankind of the Spirit of that benevolence which an Apostle assures us is the “fulfilling of the law”—comprehending as it does, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will to men.”

Impressed with these views—looking upon the present time as emphatically a *crisis*, as respects the interests of pure Christianity in these countries—believing that to meet that crisis by *active co-operation and well directed efforts, systematically pursued*, is a duty incumbent not more upon the individual members of the Unitarian body, than the several associations organized throughout the Country for advancing the interests of pure Religion, the Members of the Dorset and Somerset Unitarian Society have come to the determination of opening a correspondence with their Unitarian brethren in this Country, in Scotland, Ireland, and America, and such other places as opportunities may permit, to solicit their assistance and co-operation in enabling them, by means of interesting communications, to enlarge the sphere of their operations, increase the amount of their usefulness, and impart new and more extensive interest to their proceedings.—that thus, by infusing fresh energy and confidence into the minds of their fellow Unitarians, by drawing closer the cords which bind them to their brethren here and elsewhere, by *physical demonstration and moral influence*, to shew to the Unitarian body in this country, that they are entitled to assume an attitude more befitting their rank, intelligence, numbers, and general station in the kingdom, to induce them to combine—aware that “Union is strength”—for the obtaining of their full rights as Protestant Dissenters, and an equality of privileges as British Citizens,—for the downfall of all religious Tests and Creeds,—the

recognition of the unreserved right, to every man, of freedom of enquiry in matters of faith, and for the more extensive dissemination of what they esteem the distinguishing characteristic of the Unitarian Body—a belief in “**ONE GOD THE FATHER, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE IN HIM; AND ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND WE BY HIM.**”

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## OBITUARY.

### Mrs. BARHAM.

October 28<sup>th</sup>, SARAH, wife of T. F. BARHAM, M.B., of St. Leonard’s, Exeter, daughter of the late Francis Garratt, Merchant of London. Imbued from youth with the principles of Christian piety, she continued through life to exhibit their happy influence, in the most exemplary discharge of all the duties of social life, but especially of those belonging to that domestic sphere in which female excellence shines most brightly. Those who knew her best are most aware of the genuine humility, sincerity, kindness, and piety, which formed the basis of her character, while her benevolent, useful, and religiously consistent course of life, was manifest to all. But the effusions of private affection must be restrained, and bereavement must mourn in silence an irreparable loss. It shall only be added that though educated in the doctrines of the Church of England, her maturer reflexions altered her sentiments, and established her mind in an unwavering conviction that the sole deity of our heavenly Father, and his free mercy in our redemption, are the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, the truth as it is in Jesus. For the last twenty years of her life, these views afforded her satisfaction and peace, and sustained the virtues and graces of her character. Far, however, was she from entertaining any idea of merit in herself: “I do not rely,” she said, among her last words, “on any thing that I have done; but only on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.”

B.

### RICHARD BAYLY, Esq.

At Plymouth, on Thursday night, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, RICHARD BAYLY, Esq., aged 73. He was esteemed for his virtues and honoured for his usefulness; and his loss will be severely felt, not only by his immediate family and friends, and by the Unitarian Congregation of which he was a consistent and most valuable member, but also by a more extended circle who have had the privilege and advantage of his sympathy, kindness, and support.

[We hope to be able to give our readers, in the next number, a more lengthened account of the character and usefulness of this good man.]

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### NOTICE.

IT is expected that the Annual Tea Meeting of the Plymouth Unitarian Congregation, will be held on Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup>.

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

No. XLII.

JANUARY, 1837.

VOL. IV.

## THE BISHOP OF EXETER'S CHARGE. (SECOND ARTICLE.)

In our last number, we found ourselves unexpectedly straitened for room, in our examination of the Bishop of Exeter's second triennial "Charge" to his Clergy. This circumstance has induced us to resume the subject here, particulary as the latter part of the "Charge" is that in which our readers are likely to take the most interest.

Towards the conclusion of his long and elaborate "Charge," the Bishop meekly expresses himself thus:—"I should not satisfy either your feelings or my own, if, in meeting you in this solemn way, I did not address to you *some* observations respecting the duties of our ministerial and pastoral charge." Surely not, these being precisely the topics, to which the *whole* of his address, in this solemn visitation of his clergy, should have had reference, according to all just views of the episcopal office, and according to the usual practice of his right reverend predecessors and brethren. Surely his lordship has ample opportunities in his place in Parliament, (the law for the expulsion of the Bishops not being yet passed,) to debate those legislative and semi-political subjects, to which the greater part of his "Charge" relates; —and, as all the nation knows, he is not accustomed to neglect those opportunities. He will not deny, that the very purpose for which the Constitution allows him a seat in Parliament, is that he may *there* give his advice and vote upon these matters, before those who alone have power to determine concerning them. Even, however, if the field of Parliamentary debate could not afford his lordship room enough for the display of his talents for legislation, or if peradventure the fear of Lords Brougham, Durham, and Holland, was before his eyes, there was still the resource of a *political pamphlet*, a kind of composition in which Dr. Phillpotts has already attained such great celebrity. On all these grounds it would seem that his paternal address to his clergy, in this triennial visitation of his diocese, might, without any striking impropriety, have been confined to

pastoral and spiritual admonitions. But he has judged otherwise; and all who have a sound faith in the doctrine of apostolical succession, must at once admit the wisdom of the course he has pursued.

Being ourselves, however, a little sceptical concerning the apostolical succession of Bishops, we must confess that on first reading this intimation, within six pages of the end of the "Charge," after forty or fifty pages about politics, tithes, canonries, and prebends, we did feel some regret, that his lordship had not sooner directed his thoughts to what we should have deemed the most suitable topics for the occasion. But this feeling was in a few moments entirely removed from our mind. Considering the *quality* of the new matter thus brought in at the close of the "Charge," we must needs acknowledge that the *quantity* is sufficient. Perhaps the Bishop himself had a secret consciousness, that such lofty pretensions, as he here advances on behalf of the clergy, would be most prudently asserted in a brief and summary manner. Any attempt to discuss the grounds of them, rational or Scriptural, might have produced a less favourable impression on the understandings of, at least, the *laymen* present at the delivery of the "Charge";—if indeed it can be supposed that any sound Churchman would have the presumption to employ his own understanding in judging of the arguments of a Bishop. We are bound to prefer this explanation of his lordship's extreme brevity on these topics, for two reasons; first, because it best accords with our own conviction of his profound sagacity; and secondly, because we observe that he instructs his clergy to *tell* the people, and to *remind* the people, that they are possessed of these exalted and sacred claims, not to *prove* that they are possessed of them.

The Bishop, however, so far as assertions can reach, abates not one jot or tittle of the old High-Church claims of an apostolical descent, an especial divine mission, and an exclusive spiritual authority, for the episcopal clergy. We are assured that they alone are empowered to declare and pronounce to Christ's people the absolution and remission of their sins,—that they alone can claim to rule over the Lord's household,—that they only are able to minister the means of grace,—that God's forgiveness is

actually delivered to men only by the mouth of his ministers, the clergy episcopally ordained,—that they do all these things, even as the Apostles did, with the authority and the appointment of our Lord himself. The arrogant impiety of some of the most obvious consequences of these pretensions, we must suppose, are not discerned by his lordship; otherwise he would imitate the prudent conduct of the majority of the clergy for many years past, in allowing such claims to fall silently into oblivion. He is not unapprised of this fact, for he complains that it is a particular of which they, the clergy, "have all been too neglectful." Can he not perceive, that these high pretensions have been neglected because it was felt, by all who were not utterly blinded with clerical prejudice, that they could no longer be set forth without exciting the disgust and contempt of an inquiring age? But the Bishop of Exeter's Charge is not the only evidence we have lately seen, that there is a party in the Church who think they can best withstand the unpopularity to which they have become subject, by riding this high horse. The more penetrating members of their body see the error of this conduct, and have given them hints to this effect from various quarters. What is there to support these half-exploded claims of the episcopal corporation to a divine and exclusive spiritual authority in the Church of Christ? Nothing but a presumptuous, perverted application to the modern clergy, of some of the most peculiar promises and injunctions which our Saviour gave to his inspired Apostles, when he sent them forth to execute an especial divine mission, endowed with miraculous gifts and powers. A modest way of arguing truly! It is well that the Bishop repeatedly exhorts the clergy "never to be *afraid* nor *ashamed*, to tell the people" that they have received these divine qualifications. We must say, that fear in the sight of God, and shame in the sight of men, appear to us to be the very feelings, which would most naturally arise in the minds of those who are attempting to practice such an imposition on the world.

The Bishop insists, with great earnestness, that the Church of Christ is *visible*. Doubtless it is. The multitudes of every clime and country who believe in Christ, and are called by his name, constitute a visible body of professors. Their

public worship of God, as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” their observance of Christian ordinances, in the manner which their own understanding of the Scriptures dictates, their association in religious societies and assemblies for mutual edification in the Christian life,—these constitute the visible signs of their being members of the body of Christ, the Church. Their common acknowledgment of faith in Jesus, as the true Christ, the Son of God, distinguishes them visibly from the whole unbelieving world. But the Bishop coolly assumes, that if the race of clergy who have received episcopal ordination, through Popish prelates, should cease to be kept up in unbroken succession, or if their functions should be interrupted, the Church of Christ would no longer have any visible existence on earth. What a paltry conception is this of the divine dispensation of the gospel !

The following are specimens of the manner in which the Bishop *steals* his conclusion, in favour of the especial divine authority of the episcopal clergy. “Ambassadors from Christ,” he says, “must, by the very force of the term, receive credentials from Christ. Stewards of the mysteries of God, must be intrusted with those mysteries by Him.” Yes, my lord, these appear to be close and forcible inferences; and no doubt that they fell on the ears of your clerical auditors as most conclusive arguments. But to our minds there seems to be a link or two wanting in this logical chain. How shall we be certain, that you, the Bishop and clergy, *are*, what the holy Apostles are admitted to have been, “ambassadors of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God”? There are some slight differences in the two cases, which oblige us to hesitate. The Apostles were endowed with extraordinary powers by the holy spirit, could perform miracles, and had been immediately chosen and sent by our infallible Lord,—none of which things are true of the Bishops and clergy. On the other hand, the Bishops and clergy (*some* of them at least,) mingle hotly in all the battles of political and party warfare, live in splendid houses, ride in gorgeous coaches, betray all ordinary human infirmities and worldly passions, are clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, and were appointed to their sacred stations by his Grace the Duke of Wellington,

or some other ruling statesman,—none of which things, nor any at all resembling them, were true of the holy Apostles. Beyond a doubt, “ambassadors from Christ must receive credentials from Christ.” Shew us *your* credentials, my lord, and we shall be satisfied ;—but we must crave the liberty, to “try the spirits, whether they are of God.”

on this subject. But it is rather a curious question to determine, What is an obedient, submissive son of the Church of England himself to do in this case? He is told by one Bishop, without fear or shame, that the very same spiritual authority which Christ gave to his Apostles, has descended to the clergy of the present day. From this it would seem to follow, amongst other consequences, that the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward, Lord Bishop of Durham, being one of these successors of the Apostles, and moreover occupying almost the highest station in the Church, cannot be supposed to err essentially in his exposition of the fundamental truths of Scripture. And yet we are assured by this second Bishop, that there is not in holy writ "the slightest intimation," not "the slightest suggestion," that such spiritual power as the Apostles possessed, was "in any degree to be granted after the apostolic age." What is the poor, perplexed Churchman, to do in this dilemma? Is this an example of the boasted efficacy of an established Church, in preserving unity of faith and discipline? Thanks be to God, that no ecclesiastical fetters can wholly prevent able and honest men from seeing the truth of Scripture, and declaring it; —and the fact is, that such men, of all sects and churches, agree much more nearly in their religious views than is commonly supposed; whilst ignorant, slavish, or corrupt men, still delude the people with priestly superstitions.

The Bishop makes another allusion to Scripture, of much the same stamp. "Shew the people" he says, "that the minister authoritatively pronounces God's pardon and absolution to all them that truly repent—that he does this, even as the Apostles, did with the authority and by the appointment of our Lord himself, who, in commissioning his Apostles, gave this to be the never failing assurance of his co-operation in their ministry, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,'—a promise which, of its very nature, was not to be fulfilled to the persons of those whom he addressed, but to their office,—to their successors, therefore, in that office, 'even unto the end of the world.'" Now, so far as relates to our own private judgment on this passage, we have no doubt whatever, that the promise was to be fulfilled exclusively to the persons of the Apostles. The Bishop's cool assumption that it could

not be so, is entirely founded on the expression translated “end of the *world*,” which, it is well known to all who have studied the Scriptures, may very properly be rendered “the end of the *age*,” and it may here very well be understood to mean the end of the apostolic age. Here, too, we are fortunately able to help ourselves, by setting the solid learning of one Bishop against the flippant assertions of another. “The Greek word *aiων*,” says the Bishop Pearce, “seems to signify *age* here, (Matthew, xii. 32.) *as it often does in the New Testament, and according to its most proper signification.*” Here is further perplexity for the submissive Churchman. Which Bishop shall he trust and follow? But setting all this aside, and supposing the language of Scripture to mean properly, “the end of the world,”—yet why must it refer to the *office* of the apostles, as such, in distinction from their general calling as Christian disciples? Why, in this case, may it not be, as the orthodox world commonly represent it to be, a promise of spiritual presence and guidance to *all sincere believers*? It is not long since we ourselves had to contend in argument with a clergyman, episcopally ordained, who insisted on this general sense and application of the promise of Christ; and now comes a Bishop who declares that it has no such general meaning, but applies only to the ministerial *office* of the apostles, and of their successors, the modern clergy. Indeed, these Churchmen must agree a little better with one another, in their views of the sense of Scripture, before they can reasonably expect us to bow to their decisions, as the sole authorized expounders of the word of God.

It is curious to observe the dexterity of the Bishop of Exeter, after delivering this doctrine concerning the apostolic claims of the clergy, in his endeavours to escape from some of its most offensive consequences. “If,” says he “when you thus state the nature of the visible Church, you are asked, what then becomes of those who are not, or continue not, members of that church?—tell your inquirers that you judge not them that are without, that to their own Master they stand or fall,—that God’s arm is not shortened, nor his mercy straitened, no, not by ministries or ordinances which he has himself appointed.” This is good, as far as it reaches. Yet it is notorious, from the whole history of Christendom, past

and present, that this doctrine of a privileged order of men, exclusively authorized to dispense the means of grace and hopes of heaven to the followers of Christ, never has been entertained without leading to pride and enmity towards all who conscientiously dissent from the authority thus claimed. Can the Bishop explain, by what fortunate concurrence of chances it has come to pass, that the visible Church so favoured by heaven, happens to be the very Church which earthly kings and rulers have taken under their patronage, which *they* have richly endowed, whose superior ministers *they* appoint, and over whose ecclesiastical affairs *they* have absolute controul ?

We cannot close our brief examination of this second "Charge of the Bishop of Exeter," without expressing our unwelcome conviction that he has rather degenerated than improved, in his views of the best method of serving the true interests of the national Church, since the time of his former visitation. Controversy and agitation seem to have produced on his mind their worst effects. Instead of growing wiser and more moderate in his sentiments, he has grown blind, and cannot see the precipice towards which he is hurrying the institution, and the order, which he professes to venerate so highly. The people of England, in these times, will not bear these over-strained pretensions of the episcopal hierarchy.

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## THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION.

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The apostle Paul, speaking of the grace shown to mankind in Christ, says (Ephes. 1. 7) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace." And in a number of passages, some of which shall presently be referred to, the Scripture assigns to the death and intercession of Christ an especial efficacy and importance in the matter of our reconciliation to God. A certain class of Unitarian writers have employed their ingenuity in reducing the signification of all such testimonies to the lowest possible standard. Take for example the late Mr. Belsham, who in his *Calm Enquiry* thus represents the Unitarian doctrine, as he somewhat unwarrantably calls it, on this subject. "The Unitarians generally believe that Jesus suffered death publicly

on the cross, not to appease the wrath of God, not as a satisfaction to divine justice, not to exhibit the evil of sin, nor in any sense whatever, to make an atonement for it ; for this doctrine in every sense, and according to every explanation, they explode as irrational, unscriptural, and derogatory to the divine perfections ; but as a martyr to the truth, and as a necessary preliminary to his resurrection." The man who takes on himself to speak in the name of his brethren, always undertakes a delicate task, and should be especially careful to be strictly correct in his representations. That the respectable author here cited intended any deviation from the truth in the above statement, is not for a moment to be supposed, but that he has, in fact, much overstated the opinions of many that bear the Unitarian name, is, I trust, equally certain.

But waiving any further enquiry into this circumstance, which is after all but of secondary moment, let us attempt to attain to a just and scriptural view of the great subject itself, which is in question : *the redemption that is in Christ.* Was his work only that of a prophet and a martyr, or was it something more and different ? In other words, are the expressions which the sacred writers apply to this subject, agreeable to this explanation or to that ? And here the words of that very acute and sensible writer, Paley, seem very much to the point. "There is one thing in which there is no division, or difference of opinion at all ; which is, that the death of Jesus Christ is spoken of, in reference to human salvation, in terms and in a manner, in which the death of no person whatever is spoken of besides. Others have died martyrs as well as our Lord. Others have suffered in a righteous cause as well as he ; but that is said of him, and of his death and sufferings, which is not said of any one else. An efficacy and a concern are ascribed to them in the business of human salvation, which are not ascribed to any other."—*Paley's Sermons.*

It would not be possible within the limits suitable to this paper, to produce a half, or a tenth part, of the scriptural testimonies which bear upon this subject, and which go to justify the assertion of the able divine above quoted. It may, however, be remarked, that they are of two classes, those, namely, that speak of the work of Christ figuratively, by allusion to the Jewish ritual, and those that speak of it

plainly and directly, without essentially depending on any such allusion. As examples of the latter class, which shall be considered first; our Lord himself, declared, at the supper: "This is my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." And in another place, that he was about "to give his life a ransom for many." (*Lutron anti pollown.*) Paul observes, that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures:" (1 Cor. 15, 3,) and that we are "reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 5. 10.) And again, "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5. 21.) Peter says, that "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." John, that "he is a propitiation for our sins, and for those of the whole world." There are many more similar passages, but as the argument from them all is of the same nature, it is needless to cite more than these: only let it be remembered, that the sentiment, whatever it be, which is contained in them, is not of rare and incidental, but of very frequent occurrence, and very distinctly insisted on.

All such passages appear to indicate a very special connection between the work of Christ, especially his death, and that remission of sins, or reconciliation of mankind to God, which was to follow. They indicate that the former was a divine appointment, made, properly and directly, with a view to the latter; a method, or way, chosen by divine wisdom, as the most suitable in which God could confer so great a benefit. Now, whatever may be argued in an indirect and constructive sense, respecting the efficacy of the deaths of martyrs and prophets, in promoting truth and righteousness, and thereby ultimately, remission of sins, it must be admitted, that neither the Scripture, nor any other book, is accustomed to speak of their deaths or services, in any such manner as we have here seen the death and service of Christ spoken of. The fair inference appears to be, that the services and sufferings of Christ, and those of such holy men, are not to be regarded as altogether of the same nature, or ordained for the same purposes; that the former has, by the divine appointment, a relation to our salvation, both in kind and measure, different from any belonging to the latter.

The numerous comparisons which the Scripture every

where institutes between the work of Christ and the sacrificial rites of the Old Covenant, go strongly to confirm this position. Those sacrifices, were, in numerous instances, the expressly appointed means of obtaining, to a certain extent, remission of sins, and re-admission to religious privileges. It is of importance to observe, that they had no *natural efficacy* whatever, in producing this effect, but that it depended wholly on the appointment and good pleasure of God. Their operation in obtaining forgiveness, or restoration, was not circuitous through natural means, but direct and immediate, as depending on the appointment of God. When, therefore, the death of Christ is spoken of, as it continually is, as being of the nature of a sacrifice for sin, it is strongly implied, that its efficacy in obtaining forgiveness, is not natural, circuitous, and contingent, but of a direct and immediate character, in virtue of the Divine will and appointment, as that of the sacrifices was. To my own mind, I must declare, this appears to be as clear as any proposition respecting such matters can be. No Jew ever dreamed of representing the forgiveness procured by the sacrifice, as depending on their natural efficacy in establishing truth, or inducing repentance; such a construction of the matter is palpably foreign to the scriptural account of them. Their efficacy lay in the Divine good pleasure. It was the will of him in whose breast alone it ever lies to grant forgiveness or to withhold it, to appoint these ritual observances, as the means or conditions by attention to which, on the part of his offending people, a restoration to his favor or service, should be obtained. It is not meant to be asserted, that such means had no natural religious utility, or that in appointing their observance God had no regard to this natural utility. Far from it. But the natural utility which God may perceive in those duties which he appoints, is a distinct thing from that direct and immediate benefit which he may be pleased to attach to them by virtue of his appointment, and as the especial reward or consequence of their observance. It is a parallel case with that of prayer; of which, indeed, the natural benefits are many; but which, nevertheless, we are bound to attend to, not so much on a calculation of those natural benefits, on which very different opinions may be formed, as in simple compliance with a Divine appointment, and in expectance of

a specially promised blessing: "Ask, and ye shall receive."

All the sacrifices would appear to be most properly regarded in the light of *gifts* or *offerings*, conceived of as brought, or presented, to God by his creatures. This was the most primitive mode of worship of which we read in Scripture. Abel and Cain brought to their Maker's altar a tribute from those bounties of Providence which they were severally engaged in procuring. The particular intent of these sacrifices is not explained; but it seems most natural to regard them as similar to what were afterwards, under the law, called *thank*, or *free-will offerings*. But a tribute, or present, to a superior, is a natural expression of homage on many occasions. It is suitable either to express gratitude, or to acknowledge dependence; to be a pledge of submission, or a token of repentance for misconduct, and supplication for pardon. In whatever view it be offered, its gracious acceptance on the part of the superior, implies his favorable regard to the wishes of the offerer. In the case of sin-offerings, it seems probable that some other ideas came to blend themselves with the primary notion of a gift or offering, which were indicated in the laying of the priest's hands, together with confession of sins, on the head of the victim. This has been supposed, not without probability, to have been done under the idea of devoting and surrendering, along with the sacrifice, the sins themselves on account of which it was offered. (It must, however, be observed, that this practice did not form by any means an *essential* part of a sin-offering, inasmuch as it was not always done, even when the sacrifice for sin was that of an animal, and not at all when the offering for sin was of things without life, such as flour or money.) Such then was the nature of the Jewish worship, in respect to sins: the continual offering, by the hands of the priests, of various gifts, as to God, being tokens of their sorrow for their offences, their submission to the Divine authority, and their desire to devote and surrender their sins, even as they did the victim sacrificed. Daily these rites were observed in behalf of the whole people by the common priests throughout the year: but on one annual occasion by the High Priest alone, with circumstances of unusual solemnity.

It was to such a system, with the ideas of which every Jewish mind was full, that the founders of Christianity continually alluded, in illustration of the office and work of Jesus Christ, their Lord. As by the new institution, these ritual observances had been superseded, it was very natural and proper for them, especially when addressing the Jews, to compare the new system with the old, and to insist on those points especially, in which the new religion, though changed in form, preserved, or even enhanced, the real efficacy and virtue of the old institutions. It was thus, that they were led to see in Christ a High Priest, and in his death a sacrifice.

These allusions meet us every where throughout the New Testament. They were commenced by John, the forerunner of Christ, when he exclaimed, on seeing him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In the words of Christ himself, I do not know that sacrificial allusions are so distinct; there can, however, be little doubt, that there really is one in the phrase already quoted, of "his blood being shed for the remission of sins," and there probably may be one in what he says, that "unless a man eat his flesh, and drink his blood, he hath no life in him;" in allusion to the people's eating of the sacrifices. But Paul is clear, when he says, (Rom. 3. 25.) that God "hath set forth, or ordained, Christ, to be a mercy-seat, through faith, by his blood, for the remission of sins past." And again, "In whom we have redemption, by his blood, even the remission of sins." (Ephes. 17.) In the epistle of this apostle to the Hebrews, this subject is more fully expanded, Christ being elaborately set forth as the High Priest of *our* profession, who after having made one great cleansing of sins by the sacrifice of himself, enters into heaven, the true and eternal temple, there to present himself before God, in an immortal nature, to make intercession for us.

Now we know, it is said, that these views are figurative, and that they are adopted in accommodation to the prejudices of the Hebrews. Granted. But neither are we to forget that there is an important meaning in the figures, nor that, while the work of Christ is illustrated retrospectively by allusions to the Jewish ritual, it is also declared, that that ritual was itself appointed, partly at least, prospectively,

that it might forthshadow and typify the work of Christ. The analogy between them was by no means accidental, but arose from their both flowing from the same divine counsels, and having the same ends in view.

Now in reference to the office of the High Priest, what we have to observe is this: that his duties did not lie in giving instruction as a teacher or prophet, or in affording an example of righteous life, but in accomplishing certain prescribed services in regard to God, (*ta pros ton Theon,*) in the acceptance of which services on behalf of the people, and in the consequent forgiveness and blessing, lay the benefit of his ministry. Now the work of Christ, *in his priestly character*, ought to be analogous to this. It is very true that he was a prophet, a preacher, an example, a martyr, in a most eminent sense. Still these are not functions, which in themselves display his priestly character. But there was that in his work, which truly was analogous to this character. When, in obedience to the Divine will, he devoted his life, like a sacrifice, and passing afterwards by the resurrection into the heavenly temple, was accepted and exalted in the presence of God, and empowered to dispense to all mankind, remission of sins and deliverance from death, their penalty: in this, I say, we see a high and glorious realization of the highest functions of the priestly office.

It is not that Christ, any more than the Jewish High Priest, underwent a vicarious punishment: it is not that he, any more than the other, made a satisfaction, as they say, to Divine justice; or that he wrought out a righteousness which might be imputed, on a principle of substitution, to his people. All these are ideas, in my humble opinion, quite foreign to the subject. Christ did that which Divine wisdom had judged proper, as affording the most suitable method of reconciling mankind to himself, and reinstating them in immortality. *That method was the agency of a Mediator, taken from among men, so suffering, and so exalted.* When the Mediator had so approved and perfected himself by his sufferings, the blessings of the New Covenant were *immediately* bestowed, the grave opened by the resurrection, the holy Spirit sent down, and the new age of life immortal created. Christ was forthwith “exalted to be a prince and saviour, to give

repentance to his people and remission of their sins." In this direct manner, not circuitous through natural and moral influences, but *immediate*, as by Divine appointment, was the death of Christ connected with the remission of sins and human redemption.

Such was the Divine appointment. Such the order of our redemption. Shall we now attempt to enquire at all into the reasons of that appointment, or shall we forbear? This is a subject on which we ought not to expect more light than the Scripture gives us. But does the Scripture give any explanation at all of the matter? Not much, and that in very general terms; yet, some it does give. The apostle Paul, after stating the method of Christian Redemption, makes this comment on its design; "That God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3. 26.) Here then it is declared, that this method of redemption was appointed as being *calculated to illustrate the righteous character of the Divine government.* Again, the writer to the Hebrews, (Heb. 2. 10.) uses this remarkable expression; "*It became (eprepe) him, for whom are all things, and to whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect though sufferings.*" Here then, again it is declared, that the appointment of a suffering mediator was made because "*it became God:*" an expression perfectly equivalent to that last quoted.

But let us not suppose that the suffering thus appointed was of a penal or vindictive nature. This same writer explains its object and efficacy in a very different way. "*He learned obedience by the things that he suffered, and being thus made perfect, became the author of eternal life to all who obey him, called of God, a High Priest, after the order of Melchisidek.*" (Heb. 5. 8.) Here then, we see the nature and use of these sufferings; that the mediator was qualified for his High Priesthood, not by undergoing a penalty, but by a high, holy, and transcendent discharge of duty: by approving his virtue and obedience in a most arduous and self-devoting struggle. Such is the truly *moral* character of this transaction, as represented in Scripture: it was by his own eminent virtue, that the mediator was required to earn the privilege of dispensing salvation to his sinful brethren. The writer further notices, in connexion

with Christ's priesthood, that it was "inasmuch as he himself had suffered, being tempted, that he was able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2, 18.) Here, then, is some further explanation of the reasons of this appointment; but instead of enlarging on this particular, it may be observed in general, that the Scripture indicates such reasons in all passages where it ascribes to the sufferings of Christ such influences as tend to secure that repentance and holiness, which belong to a state of reconciliation with God. For can we doubt, that in adopting a method of reconciliation, the Divine wisdom had a prospective regard to its utility in these respects?

But whatever may be the moral influences of the chosen method of redemption, and however much those influences may have been the reason by which the Divine choice of that method was determined, let it not be forgotten, for it is the hinge of the whole argument, that the direct force and efficacy of the method lay not in those influences, whatever they were, but in the Divine choice itself. The remission of sins, the gifts of the spirit, the resurrection from the dead, and the institution of life immortal, are all sovereign acts of God's good pleasure, and not natural results of any moral influences whatever. When he prescribed the manner in which these should be procured and bestowed, he consulted with his own wisdom, and considered what became the dignity of his own character, the righteousness of his own government, and the deep and long lasting influences of every great moral transaction. A result of such and so great a deliberation, is the method of Redemption which the Gospel has unfolded: "the mystery which was hidden from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to the saints."

It is the private opinion of a very humble individual that Unitarian Christians, whether in the pulpit or in print, have not in general done justice to this subject. Too generally they have manifested views not very different from those of the author quoted at the beginning of this paper. Christians of other persuasions may have gone much into extremes of an opposite character, and darkened the divine dispensation of the Gospel by very false and injurious representations of this subject. But surely, if there be here a great scriptural truth, by some overlooked, by others

misrepresented, it is most important that intelligent and candid attention should be directed to the question. Of Unitarians especially, it may be asked whether their prevailing neglect of this topic and the very cold and low views which they frequently take of it, be not one among the causes which undermines their popularity, and repulses with a chill, but too much complained of, even many whose convictions otherwise dispose them to frequent their chapels? Men are conscious sinners: such Christ came to call: to such the Gospel is addressed. All are sick with this disease, and all who care for religion, feel that they are so; nor will they be satisfied with that ministry which makes light of their complaint, any more than he that is sick in body would be satisfied with the physician who should do so. That ministry, therefore, which points out to men an express provision made by divine wisdom to meet their case; which supposes them deeply involved in the guilt of transgression, but at the same time develops a plan expressly adopted as a method of forgiveness and reconciliation, suitable alike to the character of God, and the situation of man; that ministry, I say, will not unnaturally, nor unreasonably, engage their interest more than one of a different character, and in which such topics are little insisted on. Experience appears to have proved, that a distinct and well pointed doctrine on this subject, is of great efficacy and advantage: conducing much to consolation, much to holiness, and always attracting pre-eminently the attention of the sinful and suffering sons of men. Nor is it, in my opinion, too much to predict, that until the worshippers of the Father, by giving more prominence to scriptural views of this subject than they are accustomed to do, shall meet their adversaries on more equal ground, they will not obtain the success which they earnestly desire and fondly anticipate.

In conclusion, however, it will be well to guard against one misapprehension to which experience has shown this subject to be liable. It is that of supposing that it is intended to represent the death of Christ, as having *rendered God merciful*, as it is often expressed, or done something to that effect. Now this is absolutely to invert our whole doctrine. Grossly false and unscriptural would any doctrine be, which failed to represent the essential, unpurchased, mercy

of God, as the very fountain-head from which the whole design of our redemption first flowed, and by which every step of it has been accomplished. So saith the apostle : “ All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 5. 18.) But let us not confound the method with the motives or cause of our redemption ; the former was the mediation of Christ ; the latter the paternal love of God towards us his erring creatures. Will not the most tender father show his wisdom in adopting such a method of restoring to favour an offending child, as his wisdom shall judge most suitable, both for preserving his parental authority, and for securing in the child a deep and permanent amendment ? Will not a wise sovereign, however mild and righteous his sway, if a province is in rebellion, endeavour to reclaim it to obedience and his favor, by means which, while they display his clemency, will at the same time tend to secure his dignity and authority, and establish reconciliation on a sound and durable footing ? Common sense will, I think, immediately suggest to these queries the answer which I intend ; and likewise admit that, with due allowances, the same principle acted on in these human instances, may suitably be applied to the conduct of God, the Father and Sovereign of the Universe.

To be merciful belongs to God, essentially, eternally, immutably. To receive and pardon the sincere penitent who returns from the error of his ways, is an attribute which he has claimed and exercised in every age. It is the very law and usage of his paternal government, neither depending on, nor arising out of any special provisions or conditions, in any case whatever. All for which we contend is this, that generally, in the *manner and circumstances* of exercising his mercy, the Deity will ever be guided by his wisdom, consulting duly on what belongs to himself and his righteous government : and particularly, that for conferring on mankind the special mercies of the Gospel, the restoration from sin and death thereby vouchsafed, he appointed the mediation of the suffering and exalted Son of Man, as a method, not so much for its natural efficacy, as for its *moral fitness*, most approved by his wisdom, most worthy of himself.

## ECCLESIASTES.

The words of Solomon, King David's Son,  
 King of Jerusalem—whose fame hath run  
 Thro' every land, whose wisdom reached the skies,  
 And proved all things beneath them, vanities.

Hear, O ye kings and people, from my throne  
 I preach the sermon which mankind may own,  
 And test it by experience, if their skill  
 So far can sound the depths of good and ill.

The Eternal Power, the first and final cause,  
 Hath fashioned all by fixed unvarying laws ;  
 His ever constant destinies controul  
 Heaven's blazing constellations as they roll ;  
 Perpetual sameness, equal harmony,  
 Fills the whole range of mutability,  
 And order triumphs thro' unnumbered days  
 Amidst confusion's many-tangled maze ;  
 Through set harmonic circles all things move,  
 Nor ever burst the linked bands of love,  
 Which conquers all their passions, and defies  
 Their strong resentments and antipathies.

Thus from their ancient causes all things spring,  
 The same in essence, but still varying  
 In form and feature.—Antique precedents  
 Have fashioned all, and nature thus presents  
 Perpetual repetitions.—What we call  
 Novelties, are no novelties at all ;  
 The same, tho' various. Thus the orb of day  
 Repeats his constant lines unchangeably ;  
 And even the seeming variable wind  
 Obeys its hidden laws, until it find  
 Its primal station.—Mighty rivers rise

From the great sea in cloudy canopies,  
Compass the earth, rejoice along the plain,  
Then merge at last in ocean's gulf again.

So all things work together, and repeat  
The same mysterious miracles.—We meet  
In things which have been, those which yet shall be ;  
And future wonders, in what now we see.  
Old facts in these new metamorphoses  
Are what mankind call new,—and still they please,  
Our fragile hearts, for these remember not  
Their past conditions in their present lot,  
And still exult in news, which well may seem,  
To reasons eye, aged as Methusalem.

I, Solomon the Preacher, though a king,  
Loved Wisdom more than any royal thing.  
I sought it first, and by its light was driven,  
Right on through all the mysteries under heaven.  
This dreadful toil, and this delicious bliss,  
Which sweetens all that labour's painfulness,  
Hath God bestowed on man.—And I did prove  
All things beneath the sun.—All that we love  
Or hate,—all subtlest science did I try,  
And found beneath the sun all vanity.

In these terrestrial, sublunary homes,  
Wisdom is seen where'er the goddess roams  
As in a mirror,—not her native light,  
But cold reflections of what once was bright.  
Her fires, too, like the moon's uncertain beam,  
Scarce traverse the thick clouds that round her gleam,  
And fall on earth with shadows intertwined,  
That still allure and still distract the mind.  
Bound to this twilight planet we dream on

Of heaven's perfection, till the dream is gone ;  
And waking, we discern the things which are  
Around us with perfection all at war ;  
These crooked lines no art can render straight,  
The untold irregularities of fate ;  
And such defects and empty vacancies  
As mock the arithmetic of infinities.  
And therefore in much wisdom is much grief ;  
No earthly science can afford relief  
For sin bound souls, which in increasing lore  
Of good, enlarge the scale of evil more,  
And learn that those who seek for truth aright  
Must search in holier worlds of purer light.

F. B.

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**THE "CHRISTIANS" OF AMERICA, A NUMEROUS BODY  
OF SCRIPTURE-TAUGHT UNITARIANS.**

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[Most of our readers are aware that there is a numerous class of religious professors in the United States of America, whostyle themselves simply and emphatically "Christians," —to indicate their rejection of all sectarian bonds and symbols. They are, however, "all Unitarians in faith," (*vide infra*) though quite distinct from the Presbyterian Unitarian Churches of New England. The following account of their origin, character, and numbers, is taken from a recent article in the "*Christian Examiner*." It may astonish some persons not a little, to read of 350,000 Unitarians belonging to one connexion in one country. The addition of the New England Presbyterians to this number, cannot leave the entire body of Unitarians in America to be counted at less than half a million. ED.]

"*The Christian Connexion*.—This body has published an Almanac for the use of its own members throughout the United States, appended to which is a succinct account of the origin of the denomination, its leading doctrines, and its present condition and prospects. We shall copy some of the details, as they appear to have been given on

the latest and best authorities, and are not likely otherwise to come before many of our readers. The following is given as the commencement of the Christian society in this country. Difficulties, it would seem, had arisen among the Methodists."

" Some were resolved on a moral liberal government. To digest affairs, a general Conference was held in Baltimore, in the year 1792; and, while engaged in revising the book of discipline, Mr. O'Kelly, convinced by Church history and his own observations that creeds and disciplines, &c. do not tend to the unity of the faith nor the harmony of the church, and tired with altering and revising human systems, thus addressed them—‘ Brethren, hearken unto me. Put away all other books, and forms, and let this (holding up the New Testament,) be the only criterion, and that will satisfy me.’ Mr. John Dickens opposed him, openly declaring that the Scriptures were by no means a sufficient form of government; the Lord has left that business for the ministers to do, suitable to times and places.— After some debate the vote was taken, and Mr O'Kelly lost his motion.’ ”

" After losing another motion, the object of which was to reduce the power of the bishops, Mr. O'Kelly and his friends, numbering about a thousand, withdrew, resolving, as it is said, ‘ to enjoy their religious liberty, though they might lose the society of their former brethren.’ ”

" It is remarkable that the northern and western branches of this connexion started up under somewhat similar circumstances, but without the slightest concert, not long after. The first church of the order in New England was gathered at Lynden, in Vermont, Sept., 1800, under the ministry of Dr. Abner Jones. In the West, Barton W. Stone, a leading elder, speaks thus of its origin and early history in that quarter."

" Of our separation from the Presbyterian church, and the cause which led to that event, you are informed in our ‘ Apology,’ printed in 1805. From that book you learn that we assumed a new name, i. e. *The Springfield Presbytery*. Under this name we began to constitute churches, but soon found that we were building up a new party, and thus adding to the black catalogue of sects in religion, already too numerous. We met in conference on this

subject, and unanimously determined to reject all party names, and to receive the name *Christian*, as the only name given by Divine authority to the ancient disciples. We at the same time unanimously agreed to reject all authoritative creeds and confessions, and to take the Bible alone, as the only infallible rule of faith, practice, and discipline. These our resolutions we publicly announced to the world. Strange to tell, yet it is true!! that when we had received the Bible alone, and the name of Christ, the different sects all proclaimed war against us; and some, who had been our warm friends and advocates, while we had a party name, now became our avowed enemies and bitter opposers. We now understand what it is to suffer reproach and persecution *for the name of Christ*, for until we were called by this name, we were measurably free from those evils."

"The existence and rapid spread of the Christians demonstrate how little foundation there is for the prejudice that liberal views of religion, and Unitarianism, are suited to none but men of cultivated minds, and the higher classes in large cities.

"Though this society,' we are told, 'arose in three different sections of the country, without the least knowledge of each other's existence, they unitedly fixed on two great and important points; i. e. they first renounced all human creeds; and, secondly, fixed on the holy Scriptures as the only written rule of faith and manners. This accounts for their all being Unitarians in faith,—as all rational men will be as soon as they have light and moral courage sufficient to throw off the imposing creeds of men and examine the plain word of God impartially. This doctrine is of spontaneous growth in the Holy Bible,—it is plain that there is *one God and one Mediator*, and a *Holy Spirit*. It is a doctrine founded in Christian experience, which is breathed forth in every prayer, song of praise, and holy aspiration of the humble convert.—We regard every experimental Christian in the world, in heart as a Unitarian, though creeds may contradict the doctrine. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most far-fetched, irrational, costly, and inconsistent doctrines which was ever imposed upon the church. A reform on this subject was called for, and our brethren have been pioneers in this

good work. No point has been introduced and established with greater success, for four centuries, on which so much was depending and which is calculated to confer a greater blessing upon the Christian world.'"

" Various estimates have been made of the probable number of this denomination, but the following, it is believed, may be relied on as most authentic. It is by Elder Millard."

" From my late extensive travels west of the Alleghanies, I have received information which enables me to say there will be no hazard in the following computation of the numbers of the Christian Connexion. In Kentucky we have about 8000 members, and about 80 preachers. In Ohio, we have about 11,000 members, and about 140 preachers. In other sections west of the Alleghanies, I travelled only in Western Virginia and Indiana, but I received information which I think can be depended upon, as to the number of the Christians. West of the Alleghanies we have from 400 to 500 preachers, and from 40,000 to 45,000 communicants. East of the Alleghanies, we have as many preachers and brethren as on the west side.

" We may then safely calculate the whole number of the Christian Connexion in America to be from 80,000 to 100,000, and the whole number of our preachers to be from 800 to 1000. It may also be calculated, that the number of those who attend on our ministry statedly is not less than 350,000 souls."

#### ON THE SUPERIORITY OF EDIFYING OR MORAL CONVERSATION TO THE INTELLECTUAL AND ARGUMENTATIVE.

If we consider the nature and character of conversation among superior men, we shall find it naturally divides itself into two great branches, which we have ventured to call the *edifying or moral*, and the *intellectual and argumentative*. If they convey, upon the whole, a just impression of two broad and actual systems of conversation common in society, the reader will not object to any supposed defect and critical nicety of application:

We should say, on the whole, that the first kind, the edifying or moral style of converse, has distinguished the

very highest order of minds. It is inseperably connected with the growth of faith and the religious principle which tells us, let all things be said and done to the use of edifying; and it is connected likewise with that moral principle which being essentially unitive, seeks to harmonize all the relations of truth, and blend them with the best affections of our nature.

Hence we find our Lord's conversation remarkably distinguished by its edifying and moral tendency. Every sentence he utters appears replete with pure and practical wisdom, virtue seems to go out from every expression he makes use of. To make his auditors holier, wiser, and better, is evidently the directing design pervading his every remark. His appeals come home to the heart with the force of moral demonstration, which enlists our feelings and sympathies on the side of goodness and charity. He comparatively seldom resorts to what is called the intellectual or argumentative style, for he knew that this, so far from conciliating men's minds to the emulation of virtue, generally awakens their critical faculties, to mutual animadversion and subtle contradiction.

St. Paul appears to have followed his master's track, and confirms this great lesson. He tells us expressly, to cultivate edifying conversation, building up one another in our most holy faith. To talk with the demonstration of the spirit, and the power of moral wisdom, seems to have been his constant advice; and he warns the eager and subtle minds of the Orientals and Greeks with whom he conversed, to beware how they became spoilt with vain philosophy; the vain wisdom of the world, the strife of words which man's wisdom teacheth, and endless disputations which lead to reproach.

Socrates among the Greeks, seems to have found out the same true science of conversation. He became the wisest of men, just because he sought the edifying and moral strain of converse, and the lessons that train the inward heart for immortality; while all the Greeks around him were indulging the pride of intellectual dialectics, and spending their time in incessant argumentations of metaphysical and physical philosophy; never ending, still beginning; and found no end in wandering mazes lost.

We need not cite the names of Seneca, Antoninus, and

Boethius, who in the Roman world evinced their preference of the edifying and moral system of writing and conversation. They have become the favorites of all considerate minds, and are too familiar to require further notice.

The example of such men has been followed by an illustrious succession of edifying and practical moralists. Such were A. Kempis, Fenelon, Charron, Grotius, Hall, Hale, Johnson, Addison, and Pope. The peculiar value and interest of these writers will ever depend on this very characteristic of moral conciliation. Their works are full of that practical wisdom and virtue which enables, purifies, and conciliates the minds of men, and sends them forth wiser and better to the great field of society.

But we may appeal to more familiar instances. There are certain individuals in almost every private circle, whose conversation is distinguished by a peculiarly edifying and moral tendency ; their words savour of useful information and instruction ; no portion of their time is lost in vain disputation. It is impossible to listen to them for the shortest interval, without feeling esteem and affection for them ;—which will never be felt for the most brilliant and astute disputants that ever dealt in arguments.

In these remarks in recommendation of edifying and moral conversation, as superior to the intellectual and argumentative, we only wish to reduce the latter to its just and proper subordination. Under such moral regulation, the argumentative powers will be reduced into harmony and gentleness, and may be occasionally used with advantage in the discovery and defence of truth ; but they will never assume those prominent and offensive attitudes which are always more or less disagreeable : and consequently have ever been banished from the best society, which is always on its guard against the first appearance of the strife of tongues.

Let us, then, try to improve each other by enlarging on those moral considerations which carry agreement and conciliation with them. Opinions will be naturally assimilated when advanced in the sympathy of friendship, and received with mutual allowance for the diversity of impressions and feelings. And let us endeavour to avoid all useless and unnecessary arguments, which under the appearance of wit and discrimination often conceal the essence of folly,

because they tend to divide the dearest sympathies of our nature; by starting points of difference and pursuing them with eager and imprudent curiosity to their furthest limits; this is too often the painful result of discussion by which opinions perhaps, at first, nearly similar, become analysed, divided, and at last rent asunder, leaving us to lament at leisure the foolish fondness for argument which is continually betraying us into such practical annoyances.

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### DR. CARPENTER'S LETTER TO THE “STANDARD” ON UNITARIANS.

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At the Annual District Meeting of “The Western Unitarian Society, established in 1792, for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and the Practice of Virtue, by the Distribution of Books,” held at Bristol, Dec, 14, 1836,

The Rev. R. BROOK ASPLAND, M. A., in the Chair,

It was moved by J. B. Estlin, Esq., and seconded by J. Manningford, Esq., and carried unanimously, that the following Minute of the proceedings be inserted as an Advertisement in the Standard & Courier Newspapers:—viz.

The ensuing passage was read from the first leading article of the Standard of Nov. 26th last;

“Socinians—a class whom we of the Church of England, whom a Wesleyan, whom a Calvinist, whom any Dissenter acknowledging the Holy Scriptures as a sufficient rule of faith, cannot admit to be Christian—a class with whom the Apostles of our Lord have forbidden us to communicate even in the ordinary offices of life—a degree of rigour not enjoined in the case of the unconverted Jews or the unconverted Heathen.”

The subjoined letter from Dr. Carpenter to the Editor of the Standard was then laid before the Meeting, the insertion of which was refused by the Editor on the plea that “a newspaper is not the proper vehicle for religious controversy”; but which the Editor of the Courier subsequently admitted into his Journal, with the Postscript.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

Bristol, Nov. 29, 1836.

SIR—In your leading article of the 26 instant, you not only say, with respect to the Unitarians, whom you term

Socinians, that neither you of the church of England, nor any Dissenter acknowledging the Scriptures as a sufficient rule of faith, can admit them to be Christians, but also declare, that they are "a class with whom the Apostles of our Lord have forbidden us to communicate even in the ordinary offices of life." We are often excluded from cooperation in objects of benevolence and general usefulness; but I never before saw a principle openly avowed by any man of ordinary intelligence and learning, which has for its direct object to exclude from communicating "even in the ordinary offices of life" a class of men, who, if they do not agree with others in the interpretation of the sacred records, receive Jesus as their Lawgiver, their Saviour, and their Judge. As you have, through your widely extended journal, which is read by tens of thousands who read no other, imposed this terrible ban upon us, I appeal to your sense of justice for the insertion of the following statement of our opinions.

The first and essential point is, that we solemnly reverence the Divine Authority of our Lord, believing that the spirit of Jehovah was communicated to him without measure—that his words are the words of the Father who sent him—that his mighty works were wrought by the power of the Father dwelling in him—that he was sent by him to be the Saviour of the world—that to execute the purposes of his wisdom and love, he voluntarily submitted to the death of the cross—that he was raised from the dead by the power of his God and Father, and by Him appointed to be the Sovereign and Judge of all mankind—and that he will come, in the glory of his Father, to raise the dead, and to render unto every one according as his works have been. Some among us believe that he existed before his human birth in a state of glory and happiness; but the general belief among us is, that, as to nature, he was in all things like his brethren, though without sin—"the Man Christ Jesus." We all reject the doctrine of the deity of his person, as not taught by Revelation; but we reverence the divinity of his mission, of his authority, of his prerogatives, of his power, of his work, of his character, of his word. We look for salvation only on what we conscientiously believe to be the terms of his Gospel; we deem ourselves indispensably bound to obey him; we own no

other rule of faith than his word, as delivered by himself or by his Apostles ; and we desire to yield him grateful love and veneration, for the excellencies of his character, and for all he did and suffered for our salvation.

We reverence and value the Holy Scriptures, as the faithful records of the communications of God to the children of men ; and we search them, earnestly and seriously, as containing the words of everlasting life—being solicitous, in all cases, to know what the original record really was, and what was the true import of it—to know, in short, what Christ and his Apostles really taught.

Under the solemn conviction that we are thus commanded by the Lord, we confine the worship of adoration and prayer, and direct the supreme affections of the heart, to Jehovah, the one only living and true God. We worship the Father, and him only, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that no other direction of adoration and prayer is consistent with the precepts and example of our Lord ; and we have a joyful conviction that, if we ‘worship the Father in spirit and in truth,’ we are ‘true worshippers.’—This is the great principle which separates us from all other classes of our fellow Christians ; and this we deem imperative. We pray to him alone, to whom alone Moses and the Prophets, to whom alone Christ and his apostles, prayed, and taught us to pray ; and we believe that in this we ‘honour the Son’—reverentially obeying his command ‘After this manner pray ye.’

We believe that Christ Jesus is the appointed Mediator of divine mercy to mankind ; that through him we have received ‘the atonement (katalagee, Rom. v. 11), the word of reconciliation (katalagee, 2 Cor. v. 19), the at-one-ment. And, since the great purpose for which he came—viz. to bring in the dispensation of pardon, and guidance, and spiritual aid, and everlasting life, for all mankind,—could not have been executed except by his voluntary self-sacrifice, we know that ‘in him we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins.’ We believe that the death of Christ has its operation on man, not on God. We rest our hope of pardon and final acceptance on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

Such are in substance, and essentially, the doctrines of the Unitarians ; and from a long and extensive acquaint-

tance with the Unitarian body, I do not hesitate in the conviction, that this view of their doctrine would be generally accepted among them. Such men—humbly and dutifully receiving Jesus as the Son of God, ‘sanctified and sent into the world’ (John x. 36) by the merciful Father of all—and desiring to be his, now and for ever,—you would lead your numerous readers to exclude even from the ordinary intercourses of social life.

I could not conjecture on what you rested your extraordinary declaration, till I recollect the words of the Apostle John in his second Epistle (ver. 9—11) respecting abiding in the doctrine of Christ. If this be your reference, I,—in my solemn and earnest conviction as to the doctrine of Christ, resting on his own words in John xvii. 3, Matt. vi. 9, Mark xii. 29, 30, John v. 30, and other places,—might, with equal justice, represent you as under the apostolical censure and its consequences. But I am clear, from the spirit of the Gospel, and from the declarations of the same Apostle, that he refers only to those who were deceivers, and who abandoned the spirit and the obedience of Christ; and I would not willingly return evil for evil.

From the ill-judging denunciations of man, I turn with comfort to the word of him whose word cannot fail:—“Whosoever, (saith the Lord Jesus), shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

LANT CARPENTER, Minister of the Gospel.

P.S. The foregoing letter is here given, with some slight verbal variations, as sent to the Standard the day it was written.

The term Unitarian denotes one who holds the personal unity (or one-ness) of the one God; who maintains, as the doctrine of Revelation, that Jehovah is one person, and that person the Father, ‘the only true God.’ His creed is expressed by the words of Christ himself in John xvii. 3; and by his Apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 6. Among the earlier Unitarians, Socinus taught his followers to offer prayer and subordinate adoration to Christ himself. This the Unitarians of the present day (as stated in the foregoing letter), universally deem unscriptural: it is therefore quite erroneous to call them Socinians.—Dec. 1.

Whereupon it was resolved unanimously—

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to the Editor of the Courier, for his liberal conduct in relation to the foregoing Letter, and for his remarks on the passage of the Standard which occasioned it.

That this Meeting cordially and thankfully approve of Dr. Carpenter's Letter, as a faithful exposition of the opinions of Unitarians.

WILLIAM BROWNE, Secretary.

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*"The Authority of Jesus, as a divinely inspired Teacher, sufficient for the Evidence and the Efficacy of Christianity. A Sermon preached before the Western Unitarian Society, at Lewinsmead Meeting Bristol, Aug. 18, 1836, and publishe at their request. By JOHN KENRICK, A.M. Bristol : Printed and Sold by J. Philp, 29, Clare Street ; Sold also by B. Fellowes. Ludgate Street, London. 1836."*

Mr. Kenrick's text is from Isaiah xlii, 1. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles." He remarks that these words are applied to our Saviour by the Evangelist Matthew. (ch. xii, 18,) who if he does not quote them as a direct prophecy, at least makes the description which they contain his own. The Sermon is a clearly and closely conducted argument for the proposition which forms its title, that "the authority of Jesus, as a divinely inspired teacher, is sufficient for the evidence and the efficacy of Christianity." Mr. Kenrick establishes the proof of this proposition, as it seems to us, both on the authority of Scripture, and by a course of reasoning from the circumstances of the case. But we have been particularly interested in the observations which occur in the latter part of the discourse, respecting the comprehensive nature of Christian faith, and the sentiments of liberality which a true understanding of it inspires. From these observations we make our extract:—

"If I have succeeded in showing that belief in Jesus, as the divinely commissioned Messiah, is the essential faith of a Christian, we shall have reason to rejoice in the comprehensiveness of the Chris-

tian name. Those great facts which are the everlasting basis of the Gospel, as a revealed religion, are admitted alike by men who in other respects appear to be wide as the poles asunder. At first sight they may hardly seem to hold anything in common ; but on nearer inspection we perceive their differences are like those of the different tribes of men, differences in language, stature, and complexion, while the solid frame work of the body, the characteristic lineaments of humanity, the same vital organs, the same intellectual powers, the same affections, are possessed by all. The first impulse of the savage is to treat the man of a different nation or colour, as if he were of a different species ; but as he knows him better, his heart expands towards him, and gradually he learns the universal brotherhood of the human race, and rejoices to find himself one of a countless family. So while we look only at the differences of our creeds, we are tempted to think that all cannot deserve the name of Christians. To a benevolent mind this will be no source of pleasure ; it will be glad to be convinced, that all who sincerely believe the divinity of our Saviour's mission have a right to be reckoned among his disciples. We cannot all read the Scriptures with the same eyes ; and if honesty and practical virtue are to avail as nothing, unless we come to the same conclusion respecting the nature of Christ, let us hasten back to the bosom of that Church which offers us an infallible standard of faith, and thus saves us from the destruction which awaits those who interpret the Bible erroneously. The varieties of Protestant belief would be an unanswerable argument for the Roman Catholic religion, were it not possible, amidst all these varieties, to hold all that is essential to our virtue and our peace. Let us then be consistent Protestants, studying the Scriptures freely and boldly : let no man cling in blind, unreasoning terror, to what he has been taught to consider as the only orthodox faith, as if it were synonymous with Christianity, and he must become an infidel if he renounced it. The Gospel does not so restrict the name of Christian ; nor will he who is at once the Saviour and the Judge of men condemn us by those tests and creeds, by which men presume to limit the boundless beneficence of God."

*"The Child's Guide to Christ: a Scripture Catechism for Children. To which are added, some easy Questions without Answers, Dr. Watts's Catechism of Scripture Names, &c. Belfast: Printed and Published by Simms and M'Intyre, & Sold at the Unitarian Tract Depository, 26, Rosemary Street. 1836."*

There seems to be no end to "Catechisms for Children," "Sunday School Books," &c. It should be remembered, however, that a change of such books is oftentimes in itself a very desirable thing, as being likely to impart fresh interest to the minds both of the teacher and the learners. This appears to us as good a Catechism, of the smaller

and simpler kind, as any we are acquainted with. The arrangement of the questions is good, and the answers are all Scriptural. For example :—

*"What names and titles are given to the Son of God in the Bible?"*

He is called Jesus, or the Saviour ; the Christ, the Messiah, or the Anointed ; the Mediator, the Redeemer, and the Intercessor.

*Are there any other names by which he is called?*

He is called a Prophet, Priest, and King ; the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; and the Image of the Invisible God.

*Why is he called Jesus, or the Saviour?*

Because he came to save his people from their sins. (Matt. i. 21.)

*Why is he called the Christ, Messiah, or Anointed?*

As it was usual among the Jews to set apart prophets, priests, and kings to their office, by anointing them with oil ; so Jesus, when appointed to be a prophet, priest, and king to his church, was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. (Acts x. 38. Heb. i. 9.)

*Why is he called Redeemer?*

He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.)

*Why is he called Mediator, Priest, and Intercessor?*

As, under the old covenant, God communicated his will through the medium of a chosen priesthood, by whose intercession he pardoned the ceremonial offences of his people, and promised them temporal blessings ; so Jesus—by whom he has, in these last days, revealed his will—is called the Mediator of the new covenant, “established on better promises ;” and a Priest ever living to make intercession for all who come unto God through him. (Exod. xix ; xxiv. Lev. xvi. Heb. viii ; ix ; x. Isa. lix. 16. Gal. iii. 20.)

*Why is he called our Prophet?*

Because he has instructed us in our duty, and brought life and immortality to light. (Deut. xviii. 15, Heb. i. 1, 2. 2 Tim. i. 10.)

*Why is he called our King?*

Because all power is given unto him as Head and Ruler of his people. (Matt. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 21, 22.)

*Why is he called the Way?*

He is called the Way, because he has left us an example to follow his steps, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. (1 Pet. ii. 21. John xiv. 6.)

*Why is he called the Truth?*

Because, as a faithful Witness, he declares to the world those things which he heard of the Father. (John viii. 26; i. 9. Rev. iii. 14.)

*Why is he called the Life?*

As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and he that believeth in him shall never die. (John v. 26 ; xi. 25, 26)

*Why is he called the Image of the invisible God?*

Christ, in his power, wisdom, and goodness, truly represents the Father, whom no man hath seen, neither can see. (Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3. Mal. iv. 2. Luke i. 78. Matt. i. 23.)

## OBITUARY.

## MRS. LANG.

Died at Plymouth, October 10, Mrs. Lang, (widow of Mr. Thomas Lang,) at the advanced age of 87, a consistent and highly-esteemed Member of the Unitarian congregation in that town. Having enjoyed in her early years the inestimable advantage of a *religious education*, she experienced through life its beneficial influence. She had been taught to value the Bible, to study its sacred contents, and guide her conduct by its precepts; and that volume, which had been the companion of her youthful days, afforded her support and comfort amidst the duties and trials of life, encouraged that devout gratitude to God, and cheerful submission to his will, for which she was conspicuous, even amidst the infirmities of age, and resignation and christian hope, in the prospect of death.

She was remarkable for her attachment to public worship, which nothing but absolute necessity prevented her attending. To join with her fellow-christians in praise and prayer, was to her a source of sincere enjoyment, and during 70 years she was accustomed, whenever opportunity offered, to engage with pleasure in commemorating the sufferings and death of Jesus, by the observance of that rite which he instituted "the same night on which he was betrayed." From her earliest years she was a Unitarian Dissenter, and continued to be so to the latest period of her life. Many were the trials and afflictions which she had to endure, but the religion which she had always publicly professed, shed its salutary influence on her mind, and imparted serenity and cheerfulness. Her loss cannot but be lamented by all who were acquainted with the rectitude and piety of her life, the sincerity of her attachments, the strength of her sympathy for those who were afflicted, and her unwearied benevolence towards those who were in need. Yet, most of all, will her loss be felt by those who, as long as the powers of thought remain, will remember, with affectionate gratitude, a mother's ever-watchful attention and unfailing love.

## RICHARD BAYLY, Esq.

Died, on Thursday, November 10th, at Plymouth, his native town, Richard Bayly, Esq. aged 73. His father was a merchant of that place, who, after an active and useful life, died at the advanced age of 87 years. Mr. Richard Bayly was his third surviving son. The religious opinions of his parents were those which were denominated moderate Calvinism; but such was the christian liberality of Dissenters at that period, that Mr. Bayly, with his brothers, and the sons of many other Dissenters, who held the same religious sentiments, were educated by the Rev. John Kiddeil, a well-known and highly esteemed Arian Minister, residing at Tiverton. Mr. B., on his removal from school, was placed with Mr. Cross, at Exeter; and during his residence there, was accustomed to attend George's Meeting, where the Rev. Mr. Tozer, a moderate Calvinist; the Rev. Mr. Manning, an Arian; and the Rev. Mr. Kenrick, a Unitarian,

preached by rotation ; the members of the congregation uniting in public worship, although differing in opinion in many points from each other. Dissenters were at that time more generally disposed, than they are at present, to allow to each other the right of private judgment, and though differing in opinion, to unite in the offices of devotion, and for the promotion of charitable objects.

In 1826, Mr. Bayly retired from business, and from that time was accustomed to devote a great portion of his time to the promotion of useful and benevolent objects ; and continued for many years to be an active and valuable member of the various Committees, and other public bodies, by which the affairs of the town are managed. He was remarkable for his regular and persevering application to whatever he undertook ; and many, relying on the soundness of his judgment, and on his wonted decision—the result of long experience,—looked up to him as a guide on most important occasions.

In politics, Mr. Bayly was a consistent Whig. In 1830 he was the Chairman of Lord Ebrington's Plymouth Committee, during that great contest which terminated in the return of his Lordship to Parliament for the County of Devon, free of expense. At the commencement of this struggle, he was told by all around him that success was impossible, but Mr. Bayly did not think so ; and the exertions of the Plymouth Committee greatly contributed to the result. In 1831 he again laboured, as Chairman of the Plymouth Committee, to secure the return of Lord Ebrington and Lord John Russell ; and subsequently, in 1832 when, on the division of the County, effected by the Reform Bill, Lord John Russell and Mr. Bulteel were returned for the Southern Division ; again, in 1833, when Lord John Russell was re-elected ; and again, in 1834, when Lord John Russell vacated his seat to take office under Lord Melbourne's administration, and was again re-elected. On the passing of the Municipal Reform Bill, Mr. Bayly was elected one of the Aldermen of Plymouth ; but declined, from advancing years, the appointment of Magistrate for the Borough.

Mr. Bayly was a fearless advocate of civil and religious liberty, and especially of Catholic Emancipation, at a time when much obloquy was cast upon those who stood forward in such a cause. After his return to Plymouth from Exeter, in 1786, he was accustomed to attend with his parents, the Ministry of the Rev. Christopher Mends, and subsequently, of his son, the Rev. Herbert Mends, at the Independent Chapel, in Butter-street ; but on becoming fully convinced of the truth and importance of Unitarian views of Christianity, in 1800, he became a Member of the Unitarian Congregation, with which he continued to be connected during the remainder of his life. He was a most liberal contributor to the useful and charitable institutions connected with it, and particularly to the re-building of the chapel in 1831. Nor was his assistance confined to mere pecuniary donations ; but he was at all times ready to devote his time to promoting, in every way, the general welfare of the congregation. He often expressed great satisfaction at witnessing varied indications of the steady progress of Unitarianism, not only in his native town, but in different parts of the world. Having from individual examination and firm conviction, embraced Unitarian views of Christian truth, he openly

and fearlessly professed, and was at all times ready to defend them. And it was his happiness to experience that those views of God and his government, of Christ and his teachings, are peculiarly calculated to afford encouragement and support, while passing through the active scenes of life, comfort in the hour of affliction, cheerfulness in declining age, and resignation and joyful hope in the prospect of death.

On Wednesday, Nov. 9, Mr. Bayly, though rather indisposed, attended the election of the Mayor; and in the course of the following day was again out of his house. In the evening, however, he suffered more pain on the chest, and consulted his physician, who expected an attack of gout, but did not apprehend the slightest danger. At eleven o'clock, he was left for the night, quite cheerful, and somewhat relieved. He composed himself to sleep, but that sleep was, the sleep of death. He must have expired soon after he had retired to rest. On examination, it was found that the walls of the heart had given way, so that death must have been *instantaneous*. Thus, unexpectedly was this excellent man taken from a sphere of extensive usefulness, in which he was esteemed and beloved by all who knew his work. He had no fear of death, knowing in whom he had believed. And from what he had repeatedly said on hearing of the *sudden* deaths of any of his friends, his own death was such as he would have desired.

Mr. Bayly was never married. He lived with his father and mother, and with his youngest sister soothed their declining years, until they were taken from the land of the living; and during 25 years which have since elapsed, his house has always been open to his family and friends; and he has ever acted as a parent to the children of his brother and sister. He was eminently kind and benevolent; and many find that they have lost in him—a most valued friend.

He was buried in the family vault, in Butter-street Chapel, on Wednesday, Nov. 16, by the Rev. W. J. Odgers, who subsequently, preached his funeral sermon at the Unitarian Chapel, to a crowded and sorrowing audience, from Proverbs, 10. 7. “The memory of the just is blessed.”

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*We are greatly obliged for the communication of “An admirer of Psalmody,”—which shall certainly appear in our next number.*

THE  
**GOSPEL ADVOCATE.**

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**THE DOCTRINE OF RELIANCE ON THE  
MERITS OF CHRIST.**

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It is a common and favourite opinion, that we are taught in the Scriptures to rely for salvation directly and solely on the merits of Christ. But this doctrine, in the form in which it is usually believed, is quite unscriptural, and calculated to produce injurious effects, both on our views of the divine character and on the conduct of our own lives.

It is proper, indeed, to cultivate a firm reliance on Christ, as a divinely qualified and all-sufficient Saviour of men. He was sent amongst us by God to sustain this character. He was gifted immediately by God with divine power and divine wisdom, to fit him for the discharge of this holy office. True faith in him consists in humble trust in his qualifications. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him in faith, love, and submission,—all who are willing to approach the Father through him. He is the Author of eternal life and happiness to all them that obey him. He is the Captain of our salvation, made perfect in this character by what he received from God, and what he suffered under the hand of God; and all that is requisite for his followers, in order to their sharing in the glory and happiness he now inherits, is to put themselves under his guidance, to believe what he teaches, to practice what he commands, and to follow whithersoever he leads the way, in righteousness and piety, through all the trials and temptations of this world. It is our solemn duty, if we call ourselves his disciples, to cast ourselves entirely upon him, with the deepest sense of our own natural weakness, blindness, and perversity of heart, with full confidence in his power and authority to bestow upon us, in his holy word, and in the exercise of his high spiritual dominion, all needful light, succour, consolation, and strength. To exhort men, and especially sinners, to

do this, is evangelical preaching, in distinction from mere moral instruction. To do this, and to act up to all the genuine influences of so doing, is evangelical righteousness, in distinction from a life of mere moral decorum. But the doctrine of sole reliance for salvation on *the merits of Christ*, is of a totally different kind. We will endeavour to show what it is, according to the most popular and approved statements of its professors.

The church of England, it must be confessed, in her eleventh article, which relates to this subject, is not very copious, and not at all ostentatious. It is there simply stated, that “we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.” This is sufficiently brief. It might have been unobjectionable, had it been carefully confined, on the main point, to the phraseology, or to a direct imitation of the phraseology, of Scripture;—namely, that sinners are justified freely by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by their own good works. But when it declares that we are justified before God for the *merit* of our Lord Jesus Christ, then it surely soars in its wisdom above what is written; it enters into an interpretation of the reasons and inducements of the divine conduct, in forgiving and justifying sinners, which is not matter of revelation in the Gospel. It is not declared in the Scriptures, that sinners are forgiven and justified of God, on account of the merits of Christ. The merits of Christ, as the inducement or the ground of the forgiveness of sinners, on the part of God, are never once mentioned in the Scriptures. The merits of Christ, it must be confessed, were very great; his perfect obedience, and voluntary sufferings, and self-sacrifice, in fulfilling his office as the Redeemer of men, must awaken our highest admiration, and, we may be assured, were highly acceptable to God. But we are not told, either by Jesus himself, or by any one of his apostles, that these merits were requisite to the justification, or that they are actually made the grounds of the justification and salvation of sinners. And in the absence of any direct testimony to this effect, it does not appear to be altogether safe and proper, for men to make such a very considerable addition to the doctrines of revelation.

It is plain, beyond all contradiction, that we are not to

look for the blessings of salvation on the ground of our own merits. As the Article of the Church truly states it, we cannot hope to be justified by "our own works and deservings." But then there is surely some alternative between this kind of self-reliance, and an entire reliance on the personal merits of Jesus Christ. There remains the free grace, the pardoning goodness, the unmerited mercy of God, which is by itself altogether sufficient for our justification. Now this, which appears in reason to be such a proper and natural foundation for our hopes and reliance as sinners, is the actual foundation laid in the Gospel. What says the apostle Paul? "Not by works of righteousness which we have done,"—so far he agrees with the Church Article; in what follows he holds a very different language from that Article;—"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life."

This, then, is the Scriptural ground of reliance for sinners. We see clearly that the pardon and justification of sinners rest solely on the mercy of heaven, the free grace of God. This part of his glory, the brightest jewel in his diadem as the king over all the earth,—he has not given to another. We are not said to be pardoned or accepted solely on account of the merits of Christ, any more than on account of our own merits; but by the unmerited grace and compassion of God.

When, however, it pleased God thus freely to forgive and justify sinners, of his own great mercy, it was evidently most proper he should affix whatever conditions he might judge wisest and best to the reception of these blessings. It was to be expected, indeed, that he would insist on such conditions, as he knows to be most conducive to the great ends of his moral government, the promotion of holiness and righteousness amongst his rational creatures. These conditions, then, we freely acknowledge, (in regard at least to all who are called to an acquaintance with the Gospel,) are not merely repentance for past sins, but sincere and effectual faith in Jesus Christ; faith in

him, and reliance on him, as the heaven-commissioned Saviour of men ; a faith that purifies the heart and regulates the life, according to his doctrines and commandments. It is therefore that we are said, and truly said, to be saved by faith, to be cleansed and justified from our sins through faith in Jesus Christ. These are the conditions of salvation proposed to all sinners in the covenant of the gospel. There is nothing in this simple and gracious doctrine of the Scriptures derogatory to the holiness and majesty of God ; nothing to encourage a spirit of self-righteousness in man. It ascribes all the blessings of redemption to the Father's compassion ; it lays the basis of human hope and reliance in his mercy, not in any works of righteousness which we have done, or can do ; but it does not set the personal merits of Christ between the grace of God, and the salvation of his creatures, as the procuring cause and inducement of all the blessings of christian redemption. It is in this, particularly, as it appears to us, that the grievous error of all the more popular schemes of christianity lies. "They make Christ, through the merits of his atoning sacrifice, the primary source of human salvation, purchasing the forgiveness and redemption of men from the Father's justice. The Gospel, on the contrary, makes Christ the medium or agent only in the work of our salvation, sent by the Father to execute the purposes of his mercy ; and the Father himself is the primary source of all spiritual benefits. These are not trifling distinctions." Let the serious Christian judge if they are so, when he has well considered the different effects which these opposite views must have on his feelings and conduct. They give us, in fact, different objects for the main and ultimate reliance of our souls, in the great concern of everlasting salvation. They, at the best, distract the devout emotions of the soul ; and it is well if they do not either weaken their power altogether, or give them finally a wrong direction.

If this persuasion, that it is right to place all our reliance, as sinful creatures, on the merits of Christ, were a mere speculative and harmless error, it would be unnecessary to speak with so much earnestness against it. But it is not of this character ; though happily mitigated in its effects by the influence of better views and principles, with which

it is mingled, it is still very injurious to many minds. It vitiates men's thoughts and feelings in regard to the all-gracious character of God. It fills their imaginations with false hopes, and vain substitutes for personal obedience. It hinders them from going to Christ in the spirit which ought to actuate all his humble disciples, with the desire to be guided and assisted by him in the cultivation of personal holiness. When we hear, as we frequently may, of the most notorious criminals, men whose lives have been spent in every kind of profligacy and sin, declaring themselves upon the scaffold confident of future glory, because in their dying moments they have determined to rely on the merits of Christ,—then we cannot but see and lament, how deplorably the genuine Christian religion has been perverted by this and similar errors. Would that the thousands of pious and virtuous Christians, who hold this doctrine with so much pertinacity, could be brought to view it in its proper light. Then should we behold the prevalence of juster sentiments; and the Gospel would soon appear to the eyes of all, what it really is, a dispensation of unmerited mercy, a covenant of free grace between God and mankind, whereof Jesus Christ is the holy and benevolent Mediator.

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## ON CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE.

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The moral code of the Gospel has ever received the highest commendations from the wise and virtuous part of mankind. But while every one echoes these praises, it is not every one who endeavours with the requisite attention to attain to an adequate knowledge of the subject on which he speaks. It is indeed very commonly imagined, that whatever difficulties there may be in many doctrinal principles of our religion, in the preceptive or practical part of it there is nothing but what is so perfectly plain and familiar, that all ignorance and doubt in such matters are of necessity precluded. And there is no doubt that, in regard to the most *general* principles of Christian morals, such an opinion is very well founded; but there is as little doubt, that as soon as we attempt to trace these principles down to the *particular* applications which the duties of life

require, we shall find very many exceptions to it. We shall find many cases in which to decide on the line of conduct most becoming a Christian disciple, most consonant to the genius and principles of the Gospel, will appear by no means so obvious a matter.

Were it otherwise, how could we account for that wide difference of judgment respecting the right and the wrong in individual cases, and wide resulting difference of conduct, which we daily witness in most sincerely Christian men? How much does this often astonish us! What unhappiness does it produce! what scandals it occasions! Shall we say that it all arises from a difference in the view or apprehension of facts! Experience will hardly justify this supposition. We shall find that even with the same facts before them, and the same general Christian principles to apply to them, the moral judgments of men in relation to particular cases widely differ. Hence we may fairly infer the advantage of bestowing on Christian ethics a more careful study than is commonly done.

Among the particulars to which these remarks might be applied perhaps, one of the most considerable is that of assigning to courage, or rather, fortitude, its proper place and bounds among Christian virtues.

On the whole, fortitude, considered as a *Christian* virtue, would appear to be in some degree neglected and undervalued. No doubt, the Gospel, like an angel of love and mercy descending from heaven, took under its especial patronage those gentle virtues of forgiveness kindness and humility, which either amidst the rudeness of uncivilized nature, or the licentious ferocity of heathen superstition, had been dispersed, overborne, and trampled under foot. Notwithstanding the inestimable value of these qualities in promoting the real happiness of human life, it was for Christianity to decide whether they should rank as virtues or as weaknesses. This explains the pains which the New Testament bestows in their inculcation.

But though this be the case, it would be doing great injustice to the Gospel to suppose that it passes uncommended the bolder and manlier virtues of constancy and courage. In fact such a supposition would be any thing but the truth. It is not so much in its estimate of these virtues themselves as in the objects to which it directs them, that Christianity

differs from other systems. Courage, as admired by the world, has for the most part been displayed in aggression or retaliation, in seeking personal or national aggrandizement, in achieving power and glory. The Gospel, on the other hand, teaches us to value courage chiefly as subservient to a conscientious perseverance in the discharge of duty, to a resolute determination to obey God rather than men, to a dauntless confession of what is believed to be truth, to a calm and steadfast trust in divine providence, to a superiority to false shame, to a magnanimity which rises above resentment, and finally, to a readiness to defend the oppressed, assist the suffering, and undertake every kind and generous enterprize. It is in short the courage of piety sympathy and love, instead of that of selfishness and ambition.

No one acquainted with the Gospel will hesitate to allow that the virtue here described is therein forcibly commend-ed both by example and precept.

No brighter example of true fortitude is on record than that of Christ himself. We very often speak of the "*meek and lowly*" Jesus; and no doubt, with all his supernatural dignity and power, he did inimitably illustrate those lovely graces. But were not the *heroic* parts of his character, if I may be allowed the expression, equally conspicuous? To touch such a theme slightly would be to wrong it: I will not therefore attempt it. Suffice it to say, what I believe neither will be nor can be denied, that arduous and appalling as were the scenes through which our Lord in his brief career was called to pass, no trace of fear or weakness can be observed in any part of his conduct. He appears always to have said and done just what it was most proper and dignified in him to say and do, nor did the scowling faces of a host of malicious persecutors, to whose power for a season he knew that he was delivered up, nor the instant prospect of the most torturing death for a moment shake his constancy, or take any thing from the dignity of his demeanor. He illustrated thus his own precepts: "Fear not them that kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do." "Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Nor is it needful to point out particularly how faithfully

the first disciples of Christ imitated the holy boldness of their master. Which of them did not show that he was fearless of the worst that men could do in opposition to the truth, and ready at all times to submit to every hardship, and even death itself, in its defence? It was through such fortitude alone that we have received the Gospel, and had not these servants of God been by his grace endowed with it, the nations would still, humanly speaking, have sat in darkness and the shadow of death. They exhorted all their followers to similar constancy. "Who," said Peter, "is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be dismayed." "Count it all joy," says James, "when ye fall into divers trials, knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience." "In nothing," said Paul, "be terrified by your adversaries, for unto you it is given not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his name." And John exhorts them to be ready "to lay down their lives for their brethren." And lastly "the fearful" are enumerated in the Apocalypse among a list of evil doers for whom are reserved the judgments of heaven.

So far is any sort of cowardice or pusillanimity from being congenial to the Gospel, or reconcileable with the dignity of the Christian character. It is of importance that every Christian should understand that fear is of all things most unbefitting his profession. The grace which he has received goes to cast out even the fear of God, except in a filial and reverential sense: for he "has not received the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby he can say, Abba, Father." In him the fear of death has, or ought to have, given place to the hope of immortality. And being such, can it be right that he should still be subject to the fear of man, or any earthly evils?

Possibly some precepts of the Gospel have been rather misapplied, so as to favor a tameness or submissiveness of character beyond what was intended. In transferring to ourselves the instructions addressed by Christ to his immediate followers, we must always make due allowance for the great peculiarity of their circumstances and their great difference from our own. "To him," said Jesus, "that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other." A

precept that has been thought one of the hardest that he ever uttered, and by some has been ridiculed as a foolish one. Yet in his own person, with inconceivable dignity, he gave it almost a literal fulfilment. As he stood before the unrighteous tribunal of the high priest, an officer that stood by smote him on the face with his hand. "Jesus said unto him, If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" As much forbearance and self-possession would become us all: but a like impunity of outrage might not always be expedient in regard to the offender and the public good. In their peculiar character, and invested with miraculous powers, Christ and his apostles might with propriety and dignity act in a manner not always so suitable to common life. Paul gives a rule which adapts itself to all: "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Fortitude must, I think, be regarded as an essential and fundamental virtue, not only of every great character, but of every securely and permanently good one. Without it one cannot at least be more than a well-meaning man. Without cultivating it, who can assure himself that in the hour of trial he shall continue a Christian?

He who has allotted to our frail and vulnerable nature the rough and perilous pilgrimage of life, and placed at its close the appalling portals of the grave, whereinto all must enter, has in this appointment told us that fortitude is an endowment demanded alike by our comfort and our duty.

B.

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## ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

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*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

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SIR,—Unitarians have frequently been reproached for refusing to co-operate with their orthodox brethren in the conversion of the Heathen. Archdeacon Wrangham sneeringly asks; What tropical waste, have these apostles, or 'No apostles,' of Socinianism traversed? What polar regions have they braved,

To plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose  
On icy plains, or in eternal snows?

In what barbarous island, amidst what trackless depths, have their glad tidings been heard? If we say, "the foot-steps of their missionaries, where are they"? An echo will answer, "Where are they"?

We cannot, indeed, boast of missionaries who have braved polar regions to plant the standard of the cross; not that we are regardless of the savage or untutored state of the heathen, or indifferent to the extension of the Messiah's kingdom, but our circumstances have been particularly unfavourable to such exertions. Had we thus directed them, they would have been too small to have encouraged any reasonable hopes of success; besides, we have to contend with too many errors or prejudices at home to venture across the seas with our glad tidings of the Gospel. When a prospect has been opened to us for diffusing knowledge, virtue or happiness, in benighted parts of the earth, we have readily and cheerfully availed ourselves of it, and have combined our best energies to infuse light and vigour into the abodes of ignorance and superstition. We have sent no missionaries abroad, but the orthodox have made them to our hands. At Madras we have a small, humble but indefatigable band, who are toiling in the field of the Gospel, and preparing the minds of the Heathen for its reception, not by preaching strange and mystical doctrines, but by cultivating the mental and moral powers, and leading them by degrees to those grand and sublime truths which Christianity unfolds.

We withhold our aid from popular missionary exertions, because those who sanction and zealously support them, adopt means unfavourable to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual improvement of the Heathen. They have long pursued a wasteful expenditure, and a mode of proselyting injurious in its operations and miserable in its issue. They begin at the wrong end. Instead of enlightening and strengthening the darkened mind, and preparing it for the reception of Christian evidence, they inculcate their peculiar doctrines, which disgust the inquisitive and intelligent Heathen, and which the unthinking are induced to accept only by a splendid bribe. Certain it is that such means cannot make good members of society, or faithful Christians. The zealous harangues which are made at Missionary Meetings would lead some to denounce this conclusion,

as rash and false. Then thousands and tens of thousands are represented as being brought over to the Lord ! At a meeting not long since, a host of conversions was reported to have been made among the New Zealanders. But what is the fact ? *Not a single convert has been made.* The missionaries have been driven from the island. After years of incessant toil and hardships, and the expenditure of thousands of pounds, the mission has proved a total failure. Lieut. Breton, R. N., in his recently published work on New South Wales, &c. assigns the cause of this failure, which it would be well for the Orthodox to review and ponder. He says, "One thing is quite certain, namely, that no adult native has hitherto been converted, which may possibly arise from the circumstance of the missionaries trying, as Kotzebue remarks, to make Christians of them before they make them men. More than one New Zealander has demanded a musket or blanket, for listening to a missionary, and declined to attend because refused a reward. This reminds me of the Coobd in Anastatius, who chose to become a Catholic while rice was distributed, but when the supply ceased, cried out "no pillaff, no pope!"

No better effects can be anticipated while the Missionaries make their orthodox doctrines of more value than the diffusion of general instruction, and social order. Let them abandon their mysteries, and devote all their energies to the extension of civilization, to the instruction of the savage in the useful arts of life, and enhance its social and domestic comforts, then will they achieve the great good of softening the ferocity of the heathen character, and of lessening the evils which now disgrace and afflict it. Then will they promote a progressive increase of virtue and happiness in the great family of the universe, and realize the fondest hopes of the friends of pure religion, who will cheerfully co-operate in promoting the glory of God and the happiness of man, by establishing the reign of righteousness, charity and universal virtue.

J. T. H.

**ODE**  
**FOR THE FUNERAL OF DR. SPURZHEIM;**  
**Nov. 17, 1832.**

WRITTEN BY REV. J. PIERPOINT, BOSTON, U.S.

*(Annexed to the Funeral Oration by Dr. Follen.)*

STRANGER, there is bending o'er thee  
 Many an eye by sorrow wet ;  
 All our stricken hearts deplore thee,  
 Who, that knew thee, can forget ?  
 Who forget when thou hast spoken ?  
 Who, thine eye—thy noble frame ?  
 But, that golden bowl is broken,  
 In the greatness of thy fame.

Autumn's leaves shall fall and wither  
 On the spot where thou shalt rest ;  
 'Tis in love we bear thee thither,  
 To thy mourning Mother's breast.  
 For the stores of science brought us,  
 For the charm thy goodness gave,  
 For the lessons thou hast taught us,  
 Can we give thee but a grave ?

Nature's priest, how pure and fervent  
 Was thy worship at her shrine ?  
 Friend of man—of God the servant,  
 Advocate of truths divine,—  
 Taught and charmed as by no other  
 We have been, and hoped to be ;  
 But while waiting round thee, Brother,  
 For thy light—'tis dark with thee.

Dark with thee ?—no, thy Creator,  
 All whose creatures and whose laws  
 Thou didst love,—shall give thee greater  
 Light than earth's, as earth withdraws.  
 To thy God, thy god-like spirit  
 Back we give in filial trust :  
 Thy cold clay—we grieve to bear it  
 To its chamber—but we must.

## ON PSALMODY.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—I am induced to trouble you with some remarks upon one part of our public religious services, which is too frequently either neglected by the majority composing our congregations, or so carelessly and miserably performed, as in 99 cases out of the 100, to make it to be more honoured in the “breach than in the observance :” that to which I allude is Psalmody. Gratifying will it be to me, if the observations I may make upon the subject shall lead to its being treated of by an abler hand; still more gratifying, if, in any one case, they shall render more effective that which ought to be a most pleasing as well as solemn part of religious worship. That absence of precedent may not be pleaded by any one, I premise by stating that, for the introduction of music into our religious services, we have the authority of *antiquity*; but what is of more importance, the example of the earliest Christians themselves. With respect to the authority of *antiquity*. Music occupied a very important position in the ceremonies of the Jews; one class of the Levites was expressly set apart to form the choir of the temple, and during the reign of David we read, Chron. i. xxv, 7. “that those who were instructed in the songs of the Lord were two hundred four score and eight.” When the ark was brought into Solomon’s temple, “the Levites which were the singers, having cymbals, psalteries, and harps, had joined with them 120 priests, sounding with trumpets.” Josephus, indeed, gives a much more marvellous account of the temple choir of the Jews, and (which we can hardly credit) reckons some thousands of performers. David himself “praised the Lord upon the harp”, and joining the charms of poetry to those of melody, composed, for the service of his God, many of those beautiful Psalms which, in language sweeter even than that of music, addressed the heart wearied with grief, and soothed its sorrows and allayed its fears. Although in the *New Testament* no express directions are given for the performance of this part of our religious services, yet we find that the *Apostles themselves* did not neglect it. As for instance, Matt. xxvi, 30, at the conclusion of the last sup-

per we read, “when they had *sung an hymn* they went out into the Mount of Olives.” The apostle Paul says in his exhortation to the Ephesians, chap. v, 19, “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” and in Col. iii, 16, “admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”; and thus also the apostle James ch. v, 13, “is any merry? let him sing Psalms.”

Pliny, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, records “that the Christians had a custom of *singing hymns* together *alternately*.” Origen observes “we *sing hymns* to none but the Supreme Being,” &c. Eusebius speaking of the consecration of the churches during the reign of Constantine, says, “There was one common consent in chanting forth the praises of God, the performance of the service was exact, the rites of the church decent and majestic, and there was a place appointed for those who *sung psalms*, youths and virgins, old men and young.” St. Basil records the same custom in his time, though somewhat unceremoniously he calls musical instruments “the invention of Jubal of the *race of Cain*.” Augustine speaks thus of the singing at the church of Milan, “the voices flowed in at my ears, truth was distilled in my heart, and the affection of piety overflowed in sweet tears of joy.” The use of music in the services of religion may thus be traced through each succeeding age to the present day.

It would appear that the music used in the Jewish Temple, and also in the earlier period of Christianity, was the *antiphonal* or *alternate method of chanting*, though in the course of time its style became more elaborate and less intelligible, which occasioned both St. Jerome and Augustine to complain of the introduction of “theatrical notes,” and “nice singing” into the churches. In after years it was deemed necessary for Synods “to enforce adherence to a plain song and holy melody,” and the same cause in 1536 occasioned some of the clergy to present a protest to the king, declaring that “synging and saying of mass, matins or evensong is but roryng, howelyng, whisteleyng, muenyiny, conjuryng, and jogelyn and the playing at the organys a foolish vanitie;” and the commissioners afterwards appointed by Edward VI. recom-

mended, that the “quavering operose music which is called figured” should be wholly laid aside. It hence appears, as Mason observes in his Essay, that, at this time “Church music was extremely intricate,” and in consequence of this, in the before mentioned reign, *Metrical Psalmody* as it is still employed, had its origin, “or at least became *general* in England by the version of Sternhold and Hopkins. Plain congregational singing indeed distinguished the first dawnings of the Reformation. It was used by the Albigenses in the 12th and 13th centuries, by the Wickliffites in the 14th, by John Huss and his followers in the 15th, and by Luther and Calvin in the 16th.” During the persecutions in the reign of Mary, the English Protestants who had taken refuge at Geneva and Frankfort, “had their preference for this kind of music strengthened,” and on their return at the accession of Elizabeth “an attempt was made to substitute this instead of Church or Cathedral music.” The policy of the queen led her to attend to the wishes of her subjects, and accordingly it was enacted that, for the “comforting of such as delight in music it may be permitted that in the beginning, or in the end of Common Prayer, either at morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn or such like song to the praise of Almighty God, in the best melody and music that may be conveniently desired, having respect that the sentence of the hymn be understood and perceived.” That those who “delighted in music” fully availed themselves of the royal permission thus to “comfort” themselves, appears evident from the fact which is mentioned by Bishop Jewel, 1560, viz, “that sometimes at Paul’s Cross there will be six thousand people singing together.” In 1676, Mace, in his ‘Musick’s Monument,’ thus speaks of Psalm singing at York: “now here you must take notice that they had then a custom in that church that always before the sermon the whole congregation sung a Psalm together with the quire and the organ, and you must know that there was there a most excellent large *plump, lusty, full-speaking organ*, which cost, as I am credibly informed, a thousand pounds. This organ, I say, (when the Psalm was set before the sermon) being let out into *all its fulness of stops*, together with the quire, began the psalm. But when that vast *conchording unity* of the whole congregational chorus

came, (as I may say) *thundering* in, even so as it made the very ground shake under us, (oh ! the *unutterable ravishing soul's delight,*) in the which I was so transported and wrapt up into high contemplation, that there was *no room* left in my whole man, viz. *body* and *spirit*, for any thing below *divine* and *heavenly raptures.*" After this period Psalmody was gradually introduced with greater frequency into the churches, until at last Christians of every sect were permitted, without any special clause being introduced into the royal enactments, to "comfort" themselves with any quantity or quality of this species of music which their hearts might desire.

Having thus, (with the assistance of several former writers upon the subject,) traced the history of Psalmody, and having established a precedent from the customs of the earlier Christians, and also the Jews—at least for chanting in our religious services—I now proceed to offer some remarks upon the *present* performance of this part of public worship. And here I fear we must join with good Master Mace, already quoted, who thus laments, “ ‘Tis sad to hear what whining, *toling*, yelling, *screeking*, there is in our country congregations, where if there be no organ to compel them to *harmonical unity* the people seem affrighted or distracted.” I appeal to any one who has the *misfortune* to have a “musical ear,” to say whether *painful* experience has not convinced him of the applicability of this picture of 1676 to the year 1836. I ask him whether he thinks that during the course of 160 years, any improvement has been effected ? Go where you will, to the parish church, or the humbler chapel, with very few exceptions indeed, the ear is assaulted with such rude sounds as go far (at least for a time) to affright even devotion from the heart. What is the cause, then, of this ? Is it that Psalmody is devoid of all power, or was it so thoroughly shorn by passing though the hands of the Puritans, that it has no charm left ? Far otherwise. When rightly performed it is capable of producing the most extraordinary effects. The illustrious Haydn said that a simple hymn, sung in unison by four thousand children at St. Paul’s, gave him the greatest pleasure he ever received from music ; and many an individual who has heard some of our *old* psalm tunes performed at the public Oratorios

by numerous and *well-taught* singers can also bear testimony to the powerful impressions they are capable of making upon an audience. Let any one visit the chapels of the Catholics, let him listen to some of *their hymns*, and if he can remain unmoved, if (spite of the wide difference which exists between his creed and theirs) he does not feel the flame of devotion kindled by their touching melodies, his heart is as adamant, he hath no music in his soul. And yet many of these same melodies when transplanted into the parochial churches or the dissenting meetings are deprived, as by magic, of their effect, and go well nigh to drive all sober-minded Christians out of their doors. The reasons for this are, I think, sufficiently obvious. First. The musical parts of our services are not attended to or performed by those who ought to direct them. In places of worship where there is an organ, *generally* the whole duty of fixing the tunes, selecting and directing the choir, is discharged by the *organist alone*. Too often the hymns are sent to him only at the commencement of the service. The consequence is, he has *not time*, even if he possess the judgment and the inclination, to adapt tunes to them which, as with another voice, shall express their sentiments. And thus while the *words* tell perchance of sorrow and death, the organ and the choir utter, "O be joyful." Again; the organist is supposed to be a learned contrapuntist (at least every organist fancies himself sufficiently read in the "*theory*" to compose a *psalm tune*.) What is the consequence? Why that we have often forced upon us crude, ill digested, unmeaning harmonies (if harmonies they can be called) instead of having our ears delighted and our devotions raised, by such tunes as made melody even in the breasts of Martyrs at the stake, and in singing which they gave up their spirits to God. Further, as I have observed, the organist has generally the choice and sole management of the choir, and in most cases he is obliged to select his trebles from such choristers as the *Sunday school* can furnish, and must be content with the *kind* assistance of those who are ambitious of shining forth on the sabbath as Amateurs for his Altos, Tenors, and Basses. Frequently not *one individual* of the *whole choir* knows *a note of music*. Could Handel, or the celebrated Dr. Bull himself, reduce

such heterogeneous materials to order or harmony? Much less in 99 cases out of the 100 does the *organist* ever *think* of attempting such an impossible thing. Too often paid *only* for the services of the *Sunday* he feels little inclination to "practice" with his choir *during the week*. I need not point out the result where there is no organ; "confusion becomes worse confounded." Every wight who can extort from the violoncello something like a musical sound, or can blow his gamut upon the flute, thinks he has a right to exhibit his acquirements *weekly* in the singing gallery. Add to this, the discordant voices of the singers, and the uncouth character of the tunes, and who will not wish himself and brethren well rid of the nuisance. Again, the tunes themselves are frequently such as, *from association*, encourage any thing but sentiments of devotion. Who for instance can listen with any right feeling to a *penitential hymn* sung to the tune of "Drink to me only," or the glee "Lightly tread"? Who can, with composure hearken to the same music in the sanctuary which he had previously heard in the theatre! Further, when there is only a clerk to give out the tune, (with *no professed choir*), he has frequently, as Master Mace hath it, such "an unskilful, inharmonious, coarse grained, harsh voice," that it would be impracticable even for the most devout and willingly disposed congregation to join with him.

Thus I have pointed out *some few* of the hindrances to the right performance of Psalmody. Let us now seek for the remedies. There are few congregations in which there are not *some* of the wealthier class, who have received a *musical* as well as general education. Let then a committee be appointed from among them for the superintendance and direction of the choir—the organist of course making one of the number—but let it be understood that he is to act in the committee as *one of the body* not as *the organist*. —Let this committee select the tunes which they may consider suited to certain hymns—let them form a list of such hymns and tunes and let this list be on all occasions *adhered to*. When this is *once* done we shall not have to complain (as at present) of the strange contradiction which often exists between the *sound* and the *sense*, nor will the congregation be annoyed or their attention be distracted, by the continual and *indecent* whispering and turning over

of leaves which now takes place in the singing gallery of almost every place of worship, in the search after tunes ; for under this regulation the organist and choir will only have to refer to their lists and the thing sought is instantly and *silently* found. Let this committee also *zealously* attend to the practising of the choir during the week, and let them insist upon *every word* of the psalm being distinctly *uttered*, let the emphasis be *marked*, let *expression* be given, let there be no *bawling*, but let the singing be generally “ *piano*” except when the *words require* it to be “ *forte.*” At present there is neither *light* nor *shade* given, consequently no effect can be produced. Further, let the choir be composed, more than is usually the case, of the educated and influential part of the congregation. Why should a false and culpable pride prevent gentlemen from appearing in the gallery, or timidity or bashfulness cause the softer sex to withhold *their aid*. Can man be *more nobly* employed than in singing the praises of his Maker, and can woman, whose heart is the very shrine of religion, ever appear more lovely than when engaged in the performance of its duties and in making melody unto God ? Until Psalmody is thus cultivated and thus performed, it will remain as *now*, the *mockery of praise*, the mere *empty sound* of thankfulness. With respect to *tunes* (a main point indeed) the *old masters*—as Purcell, Tallis, Smith, Blow, Ravenscroft, Marcello, &c. &c.—furnish us with *classical models* for their selection. You will find no *impertinencies* in the tunes which they have composed. Their melodies are so plain that the whole congregation may join in singing them, while at the same time their harmony is so *sound* as to please the most cultivated ear. If, indeed, tunes of a livelier character are needed, as in some instances they will, let them be selected from the compositions of the *best modern masters*. Many have written expressly for this purpose, and many have written *well*. But in selecting tunes, especial care should be taken that they are of such a character as shall be understood and quickly learned by the *congregation*. Every thing of a *florid* description should be excluded, as of course should also *elaborate* and *curious* compositions, *imitations* and *fugues*; for the endeavour should not be merely to please the ears of the auditors by the singing of a *scientific choir*, but so *powerfully* to

affect even the dullest, as that his lips should not refuse to join the general hymn of praise. Again, in choirs where the intermediate parts of the harmony cannot be well sung, it will be better not to attempt them, but to be content with the treble and bass alone, which, in fact, are the only parts in which the congregation *generally* can be expected to join, and I would observe (in passing) what is obvious to every one who is but slightly acquainted with *theory*, that on no account whatever should the counter-tenor and tenor parts be allowed to be sung or played by treble voices or instruments, unless they are sung or played truly as the notes are written in the *counter tenor and tenor clifſs*. If, as is often done, they are taken the octave above, the harmony is completely destroyed, and *false progressions* will continually occur. Further, if instruments are employed in the choir, as flutes, clarionets, violoncellos, &c., let the parts played by them be played *softly*. Let it not be forgotten that they are to be considered only as *accompaniments* to the voices, especially let them be played *in tune*. The former hint may also be applicable where an organ is used. The organist should remember that his object ought to be to assist and support the voices, not to exhibit the powers of his instrument, or his own science or rapidity of finger. I now go on to observe, that where a clerk only is engaged to lead the singing, common sense one would think, points out the necessity of choosing for such an important personage one who has an intimate acquaintance with music, and a voice of good quality and perfectly in tune. Yet instead of this it is often the case, that this representative of the whole choir of Levites knows as much of music as he does of Newton's *Principia*, and

“— from his lab'ring lungs enthusiastic flows  
“ High sound, attempered to the vocal nose.”

Such things ought not to be ; let a duly appointed committee henceforth remove such a scandal from our churches. I would remark in conclusion, that the absurd custom of “giving out” the lines of the hymns, is *alone* sufficient to deprive Psalmody of much of its effect. The object proposed by this practice may be good, viz. to enable those persons who have not books, or cannot read, to join the

singing ; but it is obvious that both poetry and music *must* be thus completely sacrificed.

Upon reviewing what I have written, I find that I have not mentioned one most *effectual* method of improving our style of Psalmody, and indeed I may say the *national* taste. This is by the early instruction of children, at parochial, and other, or even *Sunday* schools, in the *elementary* parts of music ; that is *vocal* music. There is no insurmountable difficulty in the way of this. With comparatively little trouble, and in a short time, they might be taught to sing from notes, and with a *just intonation*. If my memory serves me, Burney relates that in Germany one of the indispensable qualifications of a school-master is, that he shall understand music, and that one of his duties is to instruct such of his pupils as may discover a talent for it. The consequence of this, as it respects Psalmody, will be evident in the following quotation from Avison's Essay on Musical Expression : "whoever," says he "has heard the Protestant congregations abroad sing in parts their psalms or hymns, may recollect with *some pleasure* that part of their religious worship." "I cannot but own," he proceeds, "that I have been *uncommonly affected* with hearing some thousands of voices hymning the Deity in a style of harmony adapted to that awful occasion." Is it not then a shame and a reproach to us, Mr. Editor, as an enlightened and *a Christian* people that we should thus be negligent in the performance of our religious services, that we should thus offer praise and thanksgiving to the God of Heaven and earth in a manner so *cold*, so *heartless*, so utterly *void* of *reverence* and *devotion*? To whom shall our hearts and voices make pleasing melody if not to Him who hath created us? What theme shall cause us to "break forth into singing" if not the remembrance of His mercy, His goodness, His all-surpassing love?

" Rehearse (then) His praise with awe profound,  
" Let knowledge lead the song ;  
" Nor mock Him with a solemn sound  
" Upon a thoughtless tongue."

I have now, Mr. Editor, brought my communication to a conclusion. If you deem it worthy of notice I may

possibly be inclined, at some future period, again to employ my pen upon the same subject, speaking more particularly of *congregational* singing; and I may perhaps then be able to supply a list of tunes suited to certain words, that is, so far as my humble judgment will guide me in the selection. But I trust however that in the meantime abler hands than mine will be exercised in the same work.

### AN ADMIRER OF PSALMODY.

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## THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.

On a comparison of Christianity with the religion established by Moses, one of the most obvious differences appears in the generous nature and universality of the former. In spirit it is opposed to exclusion and favoritism of every kind. The Jews had learnt to pride themselves upon their religious distinctions; the system of Moses, although designed to produce very different effects, had filled them with high notions of their own exclusive right to the protection and favor of God, and they had consequently looked with an eye of conscious superiority upon all who could not trace their descent from the great ancestor of the Israelites, or had not conformed to Jewish modes of faith and worship.—The Christian religion struck at the root of such proud and self-complacent thoughts, and uncharitable conduct. It removed the barrier which had interposed between the Jewish and the Gentile world, opening the path by which the latter might enter into communion with God, and become inheritors of the privileges recently enjoyed by the descendants of the patriarchs. It did not deprive the Jews of one single privilege which they had hitherto enjoyed, but extended each and all to others, abolishing the distinctions which had previously obtained, distinctions of family or country or name, and obliterating all traces of division and pre-eminence among the rational people of God.

Our Lord himself frequently brings forward to view this most interesting and graceful feature of his religion. He seems to dwell upon the contrast we have noticed. He tells the Jews not to pride themselves longer on their descent

from Abraham, for that *many* in a spiritual sense shall prove themselves the children of Abraham as much or more than they. He suggests to them that the time is arrived for the Gentiles to be restored to the high station and privileges which they had anciently relinquished, and to be made joint-heirs with them of the blessings of a religious covenant. And he also warns them, not to endeavour to resist the divine will, nor reject the messenger God had sent and the message of love and mercy which he bore to them, lest they should fall from their height of privilege and see others taking their places, whose only desire it was to stand side by side with them in the aspect of the divine benevolence and regard.

The 13th chapter of Luke makes us acquainted with some instances of the opposition with which the benign attempts of Jesus were too frequently met by the people whom he desired to bless. Commenting upon this opposition and the unbelief of which it was the offspring, he reminds them that they may pursue such a system of blind opposition to the counsels of heaven till their own welfare is deeply injured. “When once the Master of the house hath risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us—He shall say, I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” At that time it would be too late to redeem the past, and they must suffer the consequences of their rejection of the Messiah. But they evidently *deprived themselves* of the place which they had previously held. *They were not removed* to make way for the Gentiles, for this proceeding would have been as arbitrary as any which false doctrine seems to fix upon the righteous Governor of the universe; they withdrew themselves, so to speak, because they loved the shadows of vanity and ambition, better than the treasures of a heavenly kingdom, and were more eager to enfold themselves in their own exclusiveness than to practice that charity which extends the hand of fellowship to all the world. But, whether they relinquished their places or not, others were to be elevated to the same rank. They were to come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and sit down in the kingdom of God. They were to come from every

family, from every nation, from every climate. The invitation was sent—the command was given. No longer should one people arrogate to itself peculiar honors ; the fulness of time was arrived to which divine wisdom directed its view in the institution of the Mosaic laws and polity, the original covenant of God was extended, and all mankind were invited to become members of it.

We shall insist on this point. The privileges of the gospel are offered in sincerity and truth to mankind in general ; or they are finally secured to the same. We may adopt either interpretation of the phrase *kingdom of God*. It may be understood to denote the first invitation of the gospel, or the final consequences of an obedient reception of it ; an humble recogniton of the Messiah's claims and obedience to his commands, or a participation in the eternal happiness for which he came to prepare the human race. To all the invitation is given ; all have it in their power to secure for themselves the holy and heavenly treasures included in it.

This universality of the Gospel dispensation is said to be more of an appearance than a reality. Whilst we have, professedly, an invitation to *all* the human race to come to Jesus, to accept his offers of pardon and peace and to lay hold on eternal life—an invitation which evidently assumes the power of complying with it, there is a limit beyond which the grace and love of our Eternal Parent cannot pass, and that limit does not include numbers of those to whose ear the word of salvation comes. They are unable, in the first instance, to become the disciples of Jesus, or, finally, to win their way to the honors and rewards of heaven. A voice calls to them but they cannot obey it. A hand points to them but they cannot move at the signal. They see the glory of immortality for an instant but an envious curtain falls and severs them from it for ever. To speak more plainly, an elect bo' y of Christians, individual members of the families and nations dwelling beneath the four winds of heaven, alone can persevere in the saintly path of duty, alone can attain to the eternal privileges of the righteous. The rest are neglected and lost. By many of our Christian brethren this scheme of salvation is reverently held, though it sometimes is set forth in mystified language, and the aid of philosophy is

summoned to deprive it of its most alarming features. But disrobed of such ornaments and bereft of such aid, it is reduced to this plain statement. That some men do not possess that moral power which the Scriptures attribute to all, and cannot by any means win that heaven which Jesus has displayed to the eye of faith, and promised as the reward of righteousness. It is much easier to repeat such a statement, than to prove or admit its truth. The truth of it is not only inadmissible on the grounds of reason and a knowledge of the divine character; it is denied in that sacred volume whence flow the fountains of living truth. The terms in which Christianity is propounded, its very nature and spirit, shew that no exclusion or favoritism is hidden within it. These terms are intelligible to all—to minds of the humblest capacity as to those of profound strength and power; and every inducement presented is such as can be felt and appreciated, not by a few favored individuals, but by all who have a mind to comprehend the dictates, and a heart to feel the influences of religion. He that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. I came to call sinners to repentance. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. If ye love me keep my commandments. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world though him might be saved. All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth. The Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and from his judgment the righteous shall go away into eternal life, and the wicked into everlasting punishment. These exhortations and assurances are general;—they are universal. Language must be strangely perverted before they can be applied solely to a part, and a small part, of the great human family. Then contemplate the nature of the religion of Christ. It destroys, as we have lately remarked, all religious distinctions, placing Jew and Gentile upon an equality with each other in relation to the Supreme Being, and bringing them all nearer to the footstool of his grace. Religious equality is frequently insisted upon by our Lord, in his mild reproof of the rising pride of his disciples, in his more severe rebukes of the presumption and vain glory of the Jewish leaders; and we cannot wink at the glaring inconsistency of founding upon Christianity a system of ex-

clusion, so utterly repugnant to the avowed objects of its establishment, and to the instructions of him by whom it was established. How strange was it thus to insist upon the equality and brotherhood of the members of the Christian Church, with such strong arguments and powerful appeals, if a law had been secretly passed and brought into action, which destroyed that equality, and was about to place an insuperable and eternal bar between them !

And what is the spirit of Christianity but the spirit of love ? It proposes this divine affection as a bond of union to those who receive it ; and it professes itself to be the great and exalted gift of the God of love. But is there not an obstacle to the cultivation of such an affection in the notions of Augustin and Calvin ? Create a distinction between those who are called heirs of Christ and fellow-heirs one with another ; teach them that some shall inherit with him and that others never will, shall, or can attain to the enviable distinction, and the sacred union is endangered if it be not dissolved. On the one side there must be jealousy, on the other conscious superiority and pride ; this party will assume consequence to itself because God has chosen to elect it for his own purposes—that will feel degraded, and become a prey to envy, and manifest its dislike. And this contrariety is more apparent still when we call to mind the adorable attribute of God in which the gospel originated. He gave it in His infinite love—but how, if a vast number of those whom it addresses are separated by it from final happiness and glory, and more awful still, condemned to wear away the ages of eternity in a misery that mocks description ? The love of God might be seen in his avoiding to create beings who, his foreknowledge taught him, would be finally and endlessly miserable, or in his depriving them of the powers of perception and life, to prevent such a dreadful consummation, after they had been created ; but not in urging into life one being under his curse, and chained to misery and horror for ever and ever.

W.

We shall resume this subject in the next No.

# FORM OF SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY

AGREED UPON BY

THE PRESBYTERIAN BODY OF MINISTERS IN AND  
NEAR LONDON.\*

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**T** *When the Persons to be married and their Friends are assembled, together with the Registrar of Marriages legally appointed to that office, the Minister shall say,*

My Christian Brethren, we are gathered together in the sight of Almighty God and in the face of this congregation, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; a social relation which was instituted by God, under his promise and blessing,—was sanctioned by our Lord Jesus Christ, when he adorned by his presence the marriage in Cana of Galilee where he wrought his first miracle,—and is set forth and commended in the Christian Scriptures, as innocent and honourable to all who engage in it discreetly, advisedly, soberly, with purity of heart, and in the fear of God.

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\* This Marriage Service has been drawn up and published under the following sanction:

“DR. WILLIAMS’S LIBRARY, Red Cross Street,  
Dec. 20, 1836.

“At an Extraordinary Meeting of the Body of Ministers of the Presbyterian Denomination, residing in and near London, held by adjournment this day, it was resolved unanimously,

“That the ‘Form of Solemnization of Marriage’ prepared by a Committee appointed for that purpose, and deliberately examined and finally settled by this Body, with an ‘Introduction’ and ‘Appendix,’ is approved and recommended, and that it be forthwith published.

“ROBERT ASPLAND, Chairman.  
“THOMAS REES, LL.D, Secretary.”

This Form is, of course, not binding on any Ministers or Congregations; but we cannot refrain from expressing our hope that it will prove generally acceptable to our societies, as the compilers appear to us have executed their task with much sound judgment and good taste. The whole has been published, with a suitable introduction and appendix, and may be procured through the hands of any bookseller.

¶ Then speaking to the Persons that are about to be married, the Man standing on the right hand, the Woman on the left, the Minister shall say,

My Christian Brother and Sister, I require and charge you both, as ye will answer it at the awful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it.

¶ If no Impediment be confessed, then shall the Minister call upon each of the Parties about to be married, to make in succession the following Declaration, prescribed by Law,

"I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, A. B., may not be joined in Matrimony to C. D."

¶ The Minister shall then ask, "Who giveth the Woman to be married to the Man?" and receiving her at her Father's or Friend's hand, shall cause the Man with his right hand to take the Woman by her right hand, and to say to her as prescribed by Law,

"I call upon these persons here present to witness, that I, A. B., do take thee, C. D., to be my lawful wedded Wife."

¶ The Woman then, in like manner, with her right hand, shall take the Man by his right hand, and shall say to him, as prescribed by Law,

"I call upon these persons here present to witness, that I, C. D., do take thee, A. B., to be my lawful wedded Husband."

¶ Then the Man shall present a Ring, and the Minister taking the Ring shall deliver it to the Man, to put it upn the fourth finger of the Woman's left hand. This

*being done, and the Married Persons again joining hands,  
the Minister shall say to them,*

By this Token, the ancient and accepted symbol of conjugal love, you, *A. B.* and *C. D.*, do declare yourselves wedded to one another, as Husband and Wife, according to God's holy ordinance and the Law of the land: And you now solemnly engage and pledge yourselves, each to the other, to live together in this holy bond, and to keep the one to the other only, from this day forward; taking each other for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till Death do you part!

¶ *The Husband and Wife shall severally answer,*

"We do."

¶ *Then shall the Minister say,*

Forasmuch as these, our brother and sister, have thus engaged and pledged themselves, each to the other, before God and this company, I pronounce them henceforth Husband and Wife.

And hear ye the sacred injunction of the Christian Law-giver, with regard to the union of Man and Woman in Marriage, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

¶ *Hereupon the Minister shall deliver the following Benediction:*

May God Almighty, the Father of families, mercifully keep and bless these his servants now joined in holy wedlock, and cause their union to be a source of true and growing happiness: and may He grant them his heavenly grace that they may evermore seek to promote each other's piety and Christian virtue, and may thus be alike prepared for the felicity that shall never end, promised at the resurrection of the just, by Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

- ¶ *Here the Marriage may be registerd as the Law directs, —unless the registry can be deferred to the conclusion of the service, which, where it can be done conveniently, is to be desired.*
- ¶ *The Minister shall then deliver the following Exhortation to the Persons married :*

My Christian Brother and Sister,

You have now by joining your hands and hearts in wedlock, of your own will and accord, entered upon the most important engagement of human life; a solemn as well as joyful engagement, ordained by God for the mutual society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. You have here publicly vowed true affection and constant fidelity to one another, so long as God in his goodness shall be pleased to spare your lives. You declare yourselves to be one in heart and soul, and promise to have henceforward one common interest, and to seek each the other's welfare. You plight yourselves mutually to share the duties, the enjoyments and the cares of life, to solace one another in trouble and to tend one another in affliction. Remember habitually, I beseech you, these your voluntary professions and vows; and let it be your continual purpose and endeavour to fulfil them, by avoiding the occasions of disunion, by mutual forbearance, by confidingness, by cherishing an animable temper, by cultivating a gentle and kind demeanour, and by sympathy both in joy and in sorrow. In this religious service, you willingly consecrate, and look up to Heaven to sanctify, your union, as the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ; I therefore enjoin it upon you to maintain always the Christian character, and to train up your household in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Be ye mindful of every new duty to which ye may be called, as husband and wife, in the perpetually varying and extending relations of domestic life; and remember, that whilst every such new duty will bind you in closer dependence, it ought, in the same degree, to heighten your love one of another. And amidst all the duties and changes and trials of this world, seek for

strength and comfort from a firm reliance upon the fatherly Providence of the Ever Blessed God, and a steadfast faith in the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ ; so that when this short life, with all its joys and sorrows, shall come to an end, an entrance may be ministered unto you both into that happy and glorious state of immortality, in which we are allowed to hope that virtuous friendship will be renewed, never more to be severed by death.

¶ *The Minister shall then conclude the service with the following Prayer and Blessing :*

O GOD, our heavenly Father, we bless Thee for thy loving-kindness and tender mercy to the children of men, and rejoice that thou hast designed and formed them for happiness, and invited them into joyful communion. We praise Thee that Thou hast ordained the various useful and pleasant ties of human society ; and hast commanded, in the gospel of thy Son, our Lord, that the families of the earth should live together in constant peace and love unfeigned. To thy merciful care and heavenly blessing we commend these thy servants, who in thy sight and with humble supplication of thy favour, have at this time joined themselves together in holy Matrimony. May thy good Providence be to them a light and a shield, to guide and protect them, throughout the whole of their earthly pilgrimage. Give them plentifully of thy grace, that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made : in every vicissitude, may they be comforters of one another's sorrow and helpers of one another's joy : may they follow the recorded examples of domestic virtue, discharging with good conscience the varied and increasing duties which Thou, who gatherest mankind into families, shalt lay upon them : may they encourage one another in whatsoever things are just and pure and true, lovely and of good report : that thus walking before Thee with perfect hearts, united in thy faith and fear, they may be ready for that solemn period when all the connexions of Time shall be dissolved, and all that is of this world shall pass away, and may be pronounced, through thine abundant mercy, heirs together of the grace

of life, and joint-partakers in the felicity and glory of Heaven, promised to thy faithful servants by Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And now, may the blessing of God, the Father Almighty, be upon you all, and remain with you for evermore. Amen.

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*"Devotional Reading for Private Families. Sacred Lessons, with occasional Sermons and Hymns: in which the various Duties of Life will be enforced, by Pious and Holy Examples. By E. WHITFIELD, Minister of the Old Meeting, Ilminster. London: Printed by and for J. Eames, 7, Tavistock Street; Sold also by Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Court; Fox, 67, Paternoster Row; Sherwood and Co., Paternoster Row: and Mardon, 7, Farringdon Street."*

Mr. Whitfield has here put forth a very neat and serviceable little publication; and we sincerely wish him success in his undertaking, for the benefit of all who may find an opportunity of reading his "sacred lessons." Both the subjects and the style of these lessons are simple and practical, well adapted, as the editor designs them, for devotional reading in private families. The contents of the first number are as follows:—"The invitation of Jesus";—"On reading the Scriptures", chapters 1, 2;—"The value of good intentions";—"The Patriarch Noah." We select a paragraph from the first article:—

"It may be allowed that the duties of the young are not of the same magnitude as those of persons of mature age. There is a difference in degree, and no more than this. But they are enjoined by the same sacred authority which appoints the duties of every human being: and it is enough for the young to feel this and understand it, to make them apply themselves seriously to every thing which is expected from them. Are they living in the house of their parents? What a variety of things, to which they should attend, is suggested by the very name of home! They are living with brothers or sisters, members of the same family; and they are enjoying the protection, the care, and the support of those who have given them birth. To speak of brothers and sisters, is to call to mind the affection which should subsist between all who are so closely connected together. It calls up ideas of kindness, mutual forbearance and love—ideas of peace and concord—ideas of mutual

endeavours to make home a scene of smiling joy and hope, and to fill the breasts of parents with delight towards their children and gratitude to God. Happy the young who give life to such a picture! We have spoken of their duties—these, then, are their duties. They should avoid every thing which is likely to give pain or sorrow to the other members of their circle. They should take more pleasure in gratifying a brother or sister, than in procuring their own gratification. They should be exceedingly careful not to be guilty of meanness or deception—not to be artful or cruel—not to indulge a quarrelsome disposition—not to give others cause for disliking and avoiding them. They have the ability of making their home a sad, a quarrelsome, and a miserable spot—or a cheerful, an harmonious and a lovely abode; and who can hesitate between these two extremes? What youthful bosom but beats with the warm desire to be the means of securing for his family domestic concord and domestic happiness!"

"We will remind the young, that they have parents. But we can scarcely tell how much they owe them of gratitude and obedience. It will not be easy to describe what parents undertake and perform for their offspring, from the first moment of infant life till the tie, which binds them together, is severed by the hand of death. How many anxious days—how many sleepless nights! What watchings by the sick-bed—what endurings of infant petulance—what fears and sorrows, caused by early imprudence and thoughtless disobedience? What exertions to procure the necessaries and comforts of life, and self-denial to give the chief of these to the object of their love! What prayers to heaven for the welfare and virtue of the child! It becomes the young to cherish an ardent affection for their parents, and to honor them with a grateful obedience. The incessant kindnesses and attentions which they receive, demand this from them; and they fulfil one of their chief duties in complying with the demand. It will encourage them, perhaps, in this becoming and lovely devotion to their best earthly friends, to remind them that Jesus, their exalted Saviour, was during his abode on earth, as dutiful and pious a son as he was a faithful and distinguished Messenger of God. The Evangelist tells us that he was subject unto his parents; and the expression plainly denotes that they found in him a kind, an obedient, and an affectionate son. His is an example for the youthful to copy."

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PRESENTATION OF A SILVER TEA SERVICE TO THE  
REV. ROBERT WALLACE,

*Pastor of the Chesterfield Christian Unitarian Congregation.*

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On Tuesday, Dec. 27th, a very large party, members of the Elder-Yard Chapel congregation in this town, assembled in Mr. Atkinson's school-room, for the purpose of taking tea together, on the interesting occasion of presenting to their worthy and esteemed pastor, a valuable service of plate, as a small but sincere tribute of their gratitude for his services as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. The room was beautifully decorated, and the ladies of the congregation bestowed great

pains to make the party comfortable and happy. In the course of the evening several hymns were sung, and the chapel choir, accompanied by their organist, on the piano-forte, gave some appropriate anthems in their best style. The Rev. Robert Wallace opened the proceedings of the meeting by giving out a hymn, the first four lines of which we subjoin

The heavenly spheres to Thee, O God !  
Attune their evening hymn :  
All-wise, All-holy, Thou art praised  
In song of Seraphim.

After the conclusion of the hymn, Robert Malkin, Esq., as senior member of the congregation, presented the plate.

The Rev. Robert Wallace then addressed his congregation as follows :—

My Christian Friends,

I find it difficult to express, in adequate terms, the feelings of gratitude with which my heart is charged, on receiving this substantial mark of your attachment, through the hands of one for whom I entertain so sincere a personal regard. But elegant and costly as it is, I prize it, not so much on account of its intrinsic worth, as for the kind motives which have suggested the presentation of it. When I entered upon the office of pastor to this Christian society, it was not without a knowledge of the arduous duties which it would bring upon me ; and I am conscious of many things in which I have fallen far short of the high ministerial standard of excellence which my imagination had fixed. That office had been recently held, not only by my worthy predecessor, your connexion with whom, though not of long duration, was edifying and instructive while it lasted, but by a venerable servant of our common Lord, who had laboured zealously among you for a period of nearly forty years ; from whom many of you received your earliest religious impressions ; and upon whose memory, all, who enjoyed the high privilege of an attendance upon his ministry, must now look back with feelings of the most profound respect. Under these circumstances, I could not fail to be deeply impressed with a sense of the responsibility, arising out of the charge which I had undertaken. But the uniform kindness and indulgence which I experienced at your hands, encouraged me to persevere ; and the flattering testimony of your regard which I have now received, convinces me, that my efforts, however feeble, have been such as to obtain for me the meed of your approbation. Accustomed as I had been, before my settlement at this place, to follow the honest convictions of my own mind, on all subjects pertaining to religion, unfettered by creeds and articles, and amenable to no human tribunal, it was peculiarly gratifying to me to know, that my connexion with you left me, as it found me, at liberty to pursue the unbiassed dictates of my own judgment, on every question relating to Christian doctrine ; and though, on some points of minor interest, my sentiments have undergone such a change as will naturally, and indeed must necessarily result from free and unrestrained inquiry, it is satisfactory to me to feel, after the lapse of one and twenty years, that, on all the leading articles of our common faith, mature reflection

has only tended to strengthen my early convictions, and to supply me with additional motives for gratitude and thankfulness, that my lot was cast with the true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth. During the time of my residence among you, I have devoted all the best energies of my mind to the study of those holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and if, in holding forth the word of life, untiring zeal, and steadfastness of purpose, combined with humble dependence upon the divine blessing can in any degree compensate for the errors and deficiencies to which we are all more or less liable, and of which no one can feel more deeply conscious than myself, I trust I shall have cause to rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have neither run in vain, nor labored in vain. I have long been convinced, and, as far as lay in my power, have acted upon the conviction, that he who undertakes the office of a public religious instructor, and particularly in these times of unchristian division and disunion, should make it his object to blend charity with zeal, and moderation with firmness. In following out this principle, I have never shrunk from the avowal of obnoxious truth, or the exposure of popular error. But though I have explained and enforced, to the best of my ability, on all proper occasions, those views of religious doctrine which have approved themselves to my own mind, I have endeavoured not to lose sight of that charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and the end of the commandment; and if, on reviewing my ministerial labours, I have one real cause for self-congratulation, it rises from the persuasion that as a follower of him, who, when reviled, reviled not again, I have never felt the slightest disposition to speak in disrespectful, and still less in uncharitable terms, of the members of any Christian community, whose religious sentiments differ from my own. I beg once more to thank you, my Christian friends, for this splendid and enduring token of your esteem, towards the purchase of which, you must be aware, it is no small source of gratification to me to learn, that every adult member of my congregation has cheerfully contributed. I shall always regard it as a memorial of the happy connexion which has so long subsisted between us.

At the conclusion of the address, the service of plate was handed down the three rows of tables, by Mr. Thomas Woodhead and Mr. Thomas Gratton, for the inspection of the company, who expressed their high gratification at its splendid appearance, frequently accompanied, from the humbler part of his flock, with "God bless him! God bless him! May he long live to enjoy it."

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#### PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL TEA MEETING.

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On Wednesday the 28th of December last, the annual tea meeting of the Plymouth Unitarian Congregation was held in the hall of the Mechanics' Institute. At three o'clock 60 children belonging to the Sunday Schools sat down to tea, after which they retired to the gallery to make room for the members of the congregation and their friends.

By half past 6 o'clock the whole number of those who had assembled and taken tea amounted to about 450. It was very gratifying to the Plymouth congregation to see among them at such a time their respected friend Mr. Gibbs and about 80 others from Devonport. They were also favored with the presence of the Rev. J. Cropper of Exeter, Lieut. Boase of Wadebridge, Cornwall; and Mr. Snell and other friends from Tavistock. After tea, N. Downe, Esq. was unanimously requested to take the Chair. The chapel choir then sang an anthem, taken from the 133rd Psalm. "How good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, &c;" after which, letters from the Rev. W. Evans, the Rev. J. Smethurst, and other friends, were read, stating the reasons which prevented their being present at the meeting. Among the sentiments which were then proposed to the consideration of the meeting were the following :—"That we congratulate our friends now assembled for the purpose of holding another congregational meeting; and hail this event as an encouraging indication of the wider spread of our opinions, and of their more extended usefulness."—"That we here express the wish that the spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of brotherhood, may be speedily and effectually manifested throughout the world; and that we therefore offer a cordial welcome to the friends from Devonport, Tavistock, and other places who have evinced this spirit by joining us on the present occasion."—"That we sincerely desire the universal spread of pure Christian truth, and therefore offer our best wishes to every one who endeavours to promote it." [This resolution was intended to have reference more particularly to Mr. Gibbs and Lieut. Boase.] "Prosperity to the Sunday Schools, with our thanks to the teachers for their zealous and persevering exertions, and to the congregation for their liberal support."—"The cause of Unitarianism throughout the world; and may Unitarians as a body be firmly united, actively zealous, and increasingly devoted to the promotion of truth and virtue."

In the course of the evening the meeting was addressed by the Rev. J. Cropper, Mr. S. Gibbs, Rev. W. J. Odgers, J. Norman, Esq., J. Pridham, Esq., Lieut. Boase, Mr. A. Nichols, Mr. J. Nichols, Mr. Gill, Mr. N. Rundle, and Mr. Ryder, of Devonport, and Mr. Snell of Tavistock. The Rev. J. Cropper gave a very pleasing account of the rapid progress of Unitarianism at Topsham, which was exceedingly encouraging to all who heard it; and sincere wishes were felt and expressed that the exertions made to extend the good cause in that town might be attended with still increasing success. The Sunday School report contained an account of the establishment, since the previous annual meeting, of a Sunday School for boys, which there is reason to hope will be extensively useful; and stated that the sum laid up by the children in the Sunday School Savings' Funds, in the course of the year 1836, amounted to nearly £16.

A Christian spirit pervaded the meeting. The addresses delivered breathed piety to God, and charity towards all men; and about 10 o'clock the proceedings of this interesting evening, which will long be remembered, were closed with prayer by the Rev. J. Cropper.

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL. IV.

## EARLY HISTORY OF THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE.

How often is inquiry checked, and a rising conviction destroyed in its birth, by the power of some almost universal but groundless prejudice. The minds of men are usually beset with certain prepossessions against every unpopular opinion; and by the force of these, persuasion is rendered a thousand times more difficult, than it would be if the proper merits of the question in dispute could be at once fairly canvassed. We believe that such is the case, at present, with regard to the Unitarian doctrines of the simple unity of God and the simple humanity of Christ, as opposed to the Trinitarian doctrine of three persons in one God. We conceive that the question is generally prejudged, on false grounds, before it comes into the court of reason to be impartially determined by its proper evidence. In this way, partly, we account for the slow progress of what appears to our minds to be so clearly the truth as it is in Jesus.

There is, in particular, one prejudice of this kind which has the greatest influence in deterring many well-meaning persons from a patient investigation of the subject, and which therefore strongly claims to be met on our part, and to be refuted if possible. It is a very prevalent notion, that the doctrine of the Trinity has been the almost universal belief of the christian church, from the earliest times; and that the Unitarian opinion is altogether a modern heresy, which was scarcely ever heard of till Dr. Priestley, in his boldness and artifice, succeeded in disseminating it among the Dissenters of this country; or, to go to the remotest period, till Socinus and his disciples in the sixteenth century spread it amongst the friends of the Reformation in the West of Europe. As long as this prejudice is entertained, we cannot be much surprised that religious people should look upon the Unitarian doctrines

with extreme suspicion, and almost with indignation. They may well ask, who was Socinus, who was Dr. Priestley, that they should deny a doctrine which appears to have been received by the christian church at large, in the times nearest to the age of the apostles, and downwards to the present day? But this prejudice is not grounded on facts. The early history of the doctrine of the Trinity is not, by any means, such as to prove that it was the universal faith of the christian church in the primitive times. On the contrary, its early history is such as to raise a strong and reasonable presumption, that it was a corruption of learned and subtle theologians, which, owing to various circumstances, gradually made its way against the sense of the general body of honest believers, and did not attain to any thing like its present form till some hundreds of years after the times of the apostles.

Our attention has been directed anew to this subject, and we have been induced to lay a brief sketch of it before our readers, by the perusal of the excellent little book referred to below\*, which it was our intention to have noticed earlier. We have seen no book for a long time, connected with the Unitarian controversy, which has appeared to us more ably and judiciously executed, or better adapted in all respects to serve the interests of truth. Mr. Forrest has brought to his task a sufficient degree of learning, with an unusual degree of patience, candour, and acuteness. We commend the pamphlet most earnestly to all who wish to possess a manual of correct information respecting the early history of the Trinitarian doctrine. We shall refer to it at every step, for the original evidence in support of the several positions which we now proceed to maintain.

In the first place, then, we may assert negatively, that it cannot be proved by historical testimony, that the christian church within the first three centuries believed in the doctrine of the Trinity; nor even that there existed any body

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\* "Some Account of the Origin and Progress of Trinitarian Theology, in the second, third, and succeeding centuries, and of the manner in which its doctrines gradually supplanted the Unitarianism of the Primitive Church; compiled from the works of various theological and historical writers. By James Forrest, A.M., Glasgow. 1836."

of believers acknowledging this doctrine, within that period. There are no creeds, or confessions, or articles of faith, of that degree of antiquity, there are no sermons or orations, no controversial or devotional books, no written documents of any description, from which any person can produce historical testimony that the doctrine of the Trinity prevailed in those early times. There is no Christian author of the first two centuries, who mentions the word Trinity, or the expressions God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, or the union of three persons in the Godhead, or any other of the common language of Trinitarians, or even alludes to the existence of such a doctrine among the followers of Christ, whether as disputed or admitted, orthodox or heretical.

Why is not this testimony produced? Because it does not exist. With respect to the following centuries, there is evidence of this nature in abundance. It can easily be shewn, from their creeds, controversies, actions and writings of every description, that in later ages almost all professing christians had learnt, from conviction or prejudice, to acknowledge the Trinity. But there is a total want of this kind of evidence with respect to the first two or three hundred years after Christ.

Now, it cannot be affirmed that there are no sources from which such information could possibly have been derived. It is certainly true, that the christian writings of that period are neither so numerous nor so copious as succeeding ages afford. It is true that some writings ascribed to men living in those times, are universally considered by learned Protestants to be doubtful or spurious. But there are some which are doubtless genuine, and they contain ample notices of the opinions and practices of the early christians; yet they contain not the slightest intimation of the Trinity, or the slightest allusion to the doctrine; unless we should allow that the use of Scriptural language implies such a belief, which of course we shall not allow, because this would be to grant to our opponents the whole question in dispute. The "Acts of the Apostles" is the oldest piece of ecclesiastical history in existence; for such is strictly the character of this interesting book. Is there a single line which can by any ingenuity be construed into an historical proof that these early converts believed in the Trinity? We ask the question with confi-

dence; for we are persuaded that no intelligent adversary will answer it otherwise than by a free confession that there is no such proof. We find in the "Acts" that these early disciples believed in the divine mission of Christ, in the remission or forgiveness of sins through faith in him, in his resurrection from the dead, in the doctrine of a future life and judgment; but not that they believed in the Trinity.

But there are some remains of eminent christian writers near to the times of the apostles,—in all probability companions of the apostles. There is a letter written to the christian church at Corinth by Clement, the minister of the church at Rome, towards the end of the first century, about the year 96, or 97.\* This person is generally allowed to be the Clement whom the apostle Paul mentions so honourably in his epistle to the Philippians, as one of his fellow labourers in the propagation of the gospel. There is also a letter to the Church of Philippi, written a few years later, about the year 107, or 108, by Polycarp, the minister of the Church at Smyrna.† This person was regarded by all christian antiquity as the friend and disciple of the apostle John, who placed him in his ministerial office. These two productions are now commonly received as genuine; and since a few undoubted interpolations have been removed, are considered as remaining in a tolerably correct state. As for the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, the companion of Paul, those ascribed to Ignatius, and the work attributed to Hermas, these are admitted to be so doubtful or so corrupt, as to be worthy of no reliance;—not that we mean to allow that if they were genuine, they would shew the prevalence or the existence of the doctrine of the Trinity in the age to which they are ascribed.

However, in the epistles of Clement and Polycarp, which are allowed to be genuine, there is no acknowledgment of the Trinity. The word never occurs in these writings, nor any other equivalent to it. There is no mention of three persons in one God,—no such expressions as God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, Triune God, or God-man. They uniformly speak of Jesus with Scriptural simplicity, as the chosen servant of the Father, his creature sent by him into the world, and by him raised from the dead.

\* Forrest, p. 17. † ibid p. 19.

But we may take still higher ground, and affirm that there is positive evidence, there is direct historical testimony, that the Unitarian doctrine was the primitive faith of christians. This is acknowledged by many of the early christian writers, especially by those who first displayed a zeal for the Trinity. They openly confess that none of the apostles, in all their labours and conversations for more than thirty years, taught the doctrine of the Trinity, or the deity of Christ, but they say it was reserved for John to propose this doctrine first in his gospel.\*

This notion is rather too extravagant and irrational to be embraced by modern christians. But what could induce those early Trinitarians to have recourse to such a strange assertion?—what but a persuasion that the first believers had no knowledge of these doctrines? This fact, indeed, they have themselves admitted and testified in various ways. It is to be clearly gathered from their writings, that all the Jewish converts to the gospel in the first ages were ignorant of these pretended mysteries. These Hebrew converts were in those times called Nazarenes, a name given to them by their unbelieving countrymen, because they were followers of Jesus of Nazareth;—or Ebionites, a word expressive of their poverty, because they forsook all to follow Christ.

The Nazarenes or Ebionites comprised all the Jews who were converted to christianity by the apostles, or in the first centuries; and surely of all people they enjoyed the best opportunities of knowing what were the true doctrines of Jesus and his apostles. The inspired teachers were natives of their country, spoke their language, and their city was for a long time the principal place of their residence. But it is universally testified by early Trinitarian writers, that all the Nazarenes, or Jewish Christians, were totally unacquainted with their favourite doctrines, and believed in the Unitarian doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ.†

But we may proceed yet farther with our argument, and shew from the confessions of those writers who first taught the Trinitarian notions, and from the manner in which they taught them, that the great body of Christian believers in their own age would not receive their teaching.

\* Forrest, pp. 48, 49. † ibid pp. 72,—84.

The earliest Author in whom we find any clear attempt to teach the deity of Christ, is the celebrated Justin Martyr.\* He lived about 140 years after Christ, and was, according to his own account of himself, zealously addicted to the study of heathen philosophy, and admired christianity the more because he thought he discovered in it some resemblance to the doctrine of Plato. This is the first writer who endeavoured to establish among christians, not the doctrine of the Trinity, but the pre-existence of Christ as the divine Logos, or Word, in Plato's sense, as signifying a certain divine person emanating from and second to God. Now in endeavouring to prove this doctrine, he confesses that very many christians condemned it.† Sixty years later than this, about the year 200, lived the celebrated Tertullian, one of the most able and eminent of all the early writers,—and we find him making the same complaint, that the plain christian people of that age, the main body of his fellow disciples, would not receive these new notions concerning the deity or pre-existence of Christ. The same writer elsewhere acknowledges, that in his time the word Trinity was shocking or scandalizing to the ears of the people.‡ Again,—Origen, who lived nearly half a century later than Tertullian, speaks in a similar strain on this subject.§ By vain subtleties did these philosophising and speculative men endeavour to blind the understandings of unlearned, Scriptural believers. It is of some importance, however, to observe the difference in the language of these two writers. Tertullian says expressly that in his time, 200 years after Christ, the majority of christians, all but the learned few, were zealous Unitarians. Origen, who flourished about the middle of the third century, only says that many pious persons had scruples on this subject. It has been well said “that the tide had now begun to set strongly in favour of the Trinitarian error. As the primitive christian virtues of simplicity, integrity, and heavenly mindedness, began to fail in the general body of believers,—as the numbers, power, and influence, of the learned converts from heathen philosophy to christianity increased,—so corruption prevailed over Scriptural truth, error was added to error, one bold and subtle speculation

\* Forrest, p. 21. † ibid, p. 22. ‡ ibid, p. 34. § ibid, p. 35.

followed another, and the doctrine of the Trinity grew, though but slowly, into form and being."

At length, Constantine, the Roman Emperor, embraced the profession of the gospel, and christianity became the religion of the State. Nearly at the same time arose the fierce dispute between Alexander and Arius, the one a christian Bishop, the other a Presbyter or Minister, at Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander, it appears, had spoken in his public instructions of a Trinity in unity,—the phrase was probably at that time a novel one, for Arius objected to it, and maintained that Christ had a beginning and was therefore inferior to the Father. The dispute soon spread,—zealous partisans arose on both sides, Athanasius being the chief,—and the peace of the church was disturbed. The new Christian Emperor summoned a council to be held in the city of Nice to determine the controversy. This was in the year 325. There were upwards of two thousand divines at this council, and the greatest clamour and violence prevailed. The result was, that the opinion of Arius was pronounced to be heretical, he and his chief supporters were banished from Alexandria, and the well-known Nicene Creed was produced, which is found in the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England. In this creed, the Son is declared to be "begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father,"—but there is no mention of the Trinity even yet; for with respect to the clause now found in that creed, relating to the equality in power and glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—it is allowed by all ecclesiastical historians, that this did not form a part of the original Nicene Creed, but was added to it about 60 years afterwards at the Council of Constantinople.\* Between these two Councils, Alexander the Bishop died,—Athanasius succeeded him, and Arius was recalled from banishment by the Emperor. Athanasius, however, refused to receive Arius into the church, and for this disobedience he was himself deposed and banished. In the middle of the fifth century, two other general Councils were held, one at Ephesus and one at Chalcedon, at which it was determined that the two natures of Christ make but one person, and still continue to be two distinct natures.

\* Forrest, pp. 10—15, & 28.

The doctrine of the Trinity had now attained its full growth, as it is exhibited in what is falsely called the Athanasian Creed.

There can be no occasion to trace farther down the stream of time the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the disputes concerning it. We have arrived at that period, when it little concerns any lover of truth to know what was believed, since we know that the whole christian world was involved in the thickest gloom of ignorance, error, priestcraft, and superstition.

We know enough to prove that the prejudice is altogether groundless and absurd, which checks inquiry into the truth of the Unitarian doctrine, from an idea that it is entirely a modern heresy, opposed to the uniform faith of all former ages. This is all which, in a controversial point of view, we can wish to establish. We only desire to remove this stumbling-block to inquiry. We have no particular desire to imitate the conduct of Trinitarians, by appealing to antiquity in support of our doctrines, content that they should be tried by the more satisfactory tests of reason and the Scriptures.

But though this is all we require in a controversial point of view, we may surely be allowed to rejoice in the conviction, that we hold the same faith, as those holy and heroic men, who first embraced the gospel of Christ, at the hazard of their lives, in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. "They who literally took up their cross to follow their Saviour,—they who sold all their possessions, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and had all things in common—thus exhibiting an instance of the purest virtue, most disinterested piety and charity, which the world ever witnessed,—they were, like ourselves, Unitarian Christians. They who so bravely endured the fierce persecution of primitive times—they who were stoned, sawed in sunder, slain with the sword, wandering about in sheep skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy,—they who thus sealed their testimony to the truth of the gospel with their blood, were like ourselves Unitarian Christians. If they were heretics, if they were in damnable error, so are we, and we are willing to share the reproach with them."

## TO A YOUNG LADY, WITH A PRAYER BOOK.

Virgin, around whose bright and cloudless way  
 No dim star frowns, no sullen tempests lower ;  
 Whose light steps wildly trace the paths of May,  
 Soft Fairy paths, begirt with many a flower.

Unstained with grief, while yet that vernal cheek  
 Glows with young health and beauty's orient dyes,  
 True to the heart, while countless blushes speak  
 The changeful, quick emotions, as they rise.

Oft to thine ear the soothing strain addrest,  
 Shall whisper vows that breathe eternal love ;  
 Visions of hope shall flutter round thy breast,  
 And Fancy light thy footsteps as they rove.

Oh, then, ere yet the world thy heart engage,  
 That heart for purer, higher raptures given,  
 Scorn not the musings of this holy page,  
 But bend by times thy better thoughts to heaven.

Nor let the Sophist quench thy generous zeal ;  
 Devotion soars where never folly trod ;  
 What saints have felt, disdain not thou to feel,  
 But guide thy trembling, doubting heart, to God.

So, when the hastening blooms of life are fled,  
 When from that cheek the roseate loves retire,  
 Religion's flame a brighter glow shall shed,  
 And light thy bosom with a purer fire.

And when thy spirits sink, thy limbs shall fail,  
 As thy worn feet thro' life's drear forests roam,  
 Thine eyes the verdant fields of peace shall hail,  
 And Faith conduct her wearied pilgrim home.

## HALLAM ON THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

[The following striking and original views of the Protestant Reformation are from a recently published work by Mr. Hallam, "Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries." Many of our readers may not soon have the opportunity of seeing the work itself; and if so, we think they will not fail to be gratified with these extracts on a subject of such general interest.—ED.]

" We cannot give any attention to the story of the Reformation, without being struck by the extraordinary analogy it bears to that of the last fifty years. He who would study the spirit of this mighty age, may see it reflected as in a mirror from the days of Luther and Erasmus. Man, who, speaking of him collectively, has never reasoned for himself, is the puppet of impulses and prejudices, be they for good or for evil. These are, in the usual course of things, traditional notions and sentiments, strengthened by repetition, and running into habitual trains of thought. Nothing is more difficult, in general, than to make a nation perceive any thing as true, or seek its own interest in any manner, but as its forefathers have opined or acted. Change in these respects has been, even in Europe, where there is most flexibility, very gradual; the work, not of argument or instruction, but of exterior circumstances slowly operating through a long lapse of time. There have been, however, some remarkable exceptions to this law of uniformity, or, if I may use the term, of *secular variation*. The introduction of Christianity seems to have produced a very rapid subversion of ancient prejudices, a very conspicuous alteration of the whole channel through which moral sentiments flow, in nations that have at once received it. This has also not unfrequently happened through the influence of Mohammedanism in the East. Next to these great revolutions in extent and degree, stand the two periods we have begun by comparing; that of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and that of political innovation wherein we have long lived. In each, the characteristic features are a contempt for antiquity, a shifting of prejudices, an inward sense of self-esteem leading to an assertion of private judgment in the most uninformed, a sanguine confidence in

the amelioration of human affairs, a fixing of the heart on great ends, with a comparative disregard of all things intermediate. In each there has been so much of alloy in the motives, and, still more, so much of danger and suffering in the means, that the cautious and moderate have shrunk back, and sometimes retraced their own steps, rather than encounter evils which at a distance they had not seen in their full magnitude. Hence we may pronounce with certainty what Luther, Hutten, Carlostadt, what again More, Erasmus, Melanchthon, Cassander, would have been in the nineteenth century, and what our own contemporaries would have been in their times. But we are too apt to judge others, not as the individualities of personal character and the varying aspects of circumstances rendered them, and would have rendered us, but according to our opinion of the consequences, which, even if estimated by us rightly, were such as they could not determinately have foreseen.

"The vital spirit of the Reformation, as a great working in the public mind, will be inadequately discerned in the theological writings of this age. Two controversies overspread their pages, and almost efface more important and more obvious differences between the old and the new religions. Among the Lutherans, the tenet of justification or salvation by faith alone, called, in the barbarous jargon of polemics, solifidianism, was always prominent: it was from that point their founder began; it was there that, long afterwards, and when its original crudeness had been mellowed, Melanchthon himself thought the whole principle of the contest was grounded. In the disputes again of the Lutherans with the Helvetic reformers, as well as in those of the latter school, including the church of England, with that of Rome, the corporal or real presence (which are synonymous with the writers of that century) in the Lord's supper, was the leading topic of debate. But in the former of these doctrines, after it had been purged from the Antinomian extravagances of Luther, there was found, if not absolutely a verbal, yet rather a subtle, and by no means practical, difference between themselves and the church of Rome; while, in the Eucharistic controversy, many of the reformers bewildered themselves, and strove to perplex their antagonists, with incompatible

and unintelligible propositions, to which the mass of the people paid as little regard as they deserved. It was not for these trials of metaphysical acuteness that the ancient cathedrals shook in their inmost shrines; and though it would be very erroneous to deny, that many not merely of the learned laity, but of the inferior ranks, were apt to tread in such thorny paths, we must look to what came closer to the apprehension of plain men for their zeal in the cause of reformed religion, and for the success of that zeal. The abolition of saint worship, the destruction of images, the sweeping away of ceremonies, of absolutions, of fasts and penances, the free circulation of the Scriptures, the communion in prayer by the native tongue, the introduction, if not of a good, yet of a more energetic and attractive style of preaching than had existed before; and besides this, the eradication of monkery which they despised, the humiliation of ecclesiastical power which they hated, the immunity from exactions which they resented, these are what the north of Europe deemed its gain by the public establishment of the Reformation, and to which the common name of Protestantism was given. But it is rather in the history, than in the strictly theological literature of this period, that we are to seek for the character of that revolution in religious sentiment, which ought to interest us from its own importance, and from its analogy to other changes in human opinion.

"It is often said, that the essential principle of Protestantism, and for which the struggle was made, was something different from all we have mentioned, a perpetual freedom from all authority in religious belief, or what goes by the name of the right of private judgment. But, to look more nearly at what occurred, this permanent independence was not much asserted and still less acted upon. The Reformation was a change of masters; a voluntary one, no doubt, in those who had any choice; and in this sense, an exercise, for the time, of their personal judgment. But no one having gone over to the confession of Augsburg, or that of Zurich, was deemed at liberty to modify those creeds at his pleasure. He might of course become an Anabaptist or an Arian; but he was not the less a heretic in doing so, than if he had continued in the church of Rome. By what light a protestant was to steer, might

be a problem which at that time, as ever since, it would perplex a theologian to decide; but in practice, the law of the land, which established one exclusive mode of faith, was the only safe, as, in ordinary circumstances, it was on the whole, the most eligible guide.

"The adherents to the church of Rome have never failed to cast two reproaches on those who left them: one, that the reformatio[n] was brought about by intemperate and calumnious abuse, by outrages of an excited populace, or by the tyranny of princes; the other, that after stimulating the most ignorant to reject the authority of their church, it instantly withdrew this liberty of judgment, and devoted all who presumed to swerve from the line drawn by law, to virulent obloquy, or sometimes to bonds and death. These reproaches, it may be a shame for us to own, "can be uttered, and cannot be refuted." But without extenuating what is morally wrong, it is permitted to observe, that the protestant religion could, in our human view of consequences, have been established by no other means. Those who act by calm reason are always so few in number, and often so undeterminate in purpose, that without the aid of passion and folly, no great revolution can be brought about. A persuasion of some entire falsehood, in which every circumstance converges to the same effect on the mind; an exaggerated belief of good or evil disposition in others; a universal inference peremptorily derived from some particular case; these are what sway mankind, not the simple truth with all its limits and explanations, the fair partition of praise and blame, or the measured assent to probability that excludes not hesitation. That condition of the heart and understanding which renders men cautious in their judgment, and scrupulous in their dealings, unfits them for revolutionary seasons. But of this temper there is never much in the public. The people love to be told that they can judge. But they are conscious that they can act. Whether a saint in sculpture ought to stand in the niches of their cathedrals, it was equally tedious and difficult to inquire; that he could be defaced, was certain; and this was achieved. It is easy to censure this as precipitancy; but it was not a mere act of the moment; it was, and much more was of the same kind, the share that fell naturally to the multitude in a

work which they were called to fulfil, and for which they sometimes encountered no slight danger.

“ But if it were necessary, in the outset of the Reformation, to make use of that democratic spirit of destruction, by which the populace answered to the bidding of Carlstadt or of Knox, if the artizans of Germany and Switzerland were to be made arbiters of controversy, it was not desirable that this reign of religious anarchy should be more than temporary. Protestantism, whatever, from the generality of the word, it may since be considered, was a positive creed ; more distinctly so in the Lutheran than in the Helvetic churches, but in each, after no great length of time, assuming a determinate and dogmatic character. Luther himself, as has been already observed, built up before he pulled down ; but the confession of Augsburg was the first great step made in giving the discipline and subordination of regular government to the rebels against the ancient religion. In this, however, it was taken for granted, that their own differences of theological opinion were neither numerous nor inevitable ; a common symbol of faith, from which no man could dissent without criminal neglect of the truth or blindness to it, seemed always possible, though never attained ; the pretensions of catholic infallibility were replaced by a not less uncompromising and intolerant dogmatism, availing itself, like the other, of the secular power, and arrogating to itself, like the other, the assistance of the Spirit of God. The mischiefs that have flowed from this early abandonment of the right of free inquiry are as evident as its inconsistency with the principles upon which the reformers had acted for themselves ; yet, without the confession of Augsburg and similar creeds, it may be doubtful whether the protestant Churches would have possessed a sufficient unity to withstand their steady, veteran adversaries, either in the war of words, or in those more substantial conflicts to which they were exposed for the first century after the Reformation. The schism of the Lutheran and Helvetic protestants did injury enough to their cause ; a more multitudinous brood of sectaries would, in the temper of those times, have been such a disgrace as it could not have overcome. It is still very doubtful, whether the close phalanx of Rome can be opposed, in ages of strong religious zeal, by any thing except established or at least confederate churches.”

## THE NEW ZEALAND MISSION.

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The reflections of a respectable correspondent in the last number of the *Gospel Advocate* on the subject of Christian Missions, may appear to many less friendly to those pious and generous enterprises than their real character deserves. It is probable that the writer labors under erroneous impressions both of the manner in which they are conducted, and of the amount of useful result by which they have actually been attended. But the statement respecting the New Zealand Mission which he has reported, apparently on the authority of Lieut. Breton, is in such striking contrast with other testimony on the same subject, that it deserves to be noticed more particularly.

The statement goes to the extent of saying, that "*not a single convert has been made, that the missionaries have been driven from the island, and that the mission has proved a total failure.*" Startled by so disastrous an account of the fate of the benevolent attempt to introduce the blessings of civilization and Christianity into so favored a country, and among so fine a race of men, I sought further information elsewhere.

Happening to have at hand the Report of the Committee of the Church Missionary Society, as read at the anniversary Meeting in last May, I turned to that part of it which relates to New Zealand. In that Report a detailed account is given of six several Missionary stations, which the above named Society alone at the present time maintains in that island. The names of these settlements are given, as well as those of the Missionaries stationed at them, and various particulars are added respecting the state of the schools, chapels, attendance of the natives, and other matters. Now an account such as this, publicly communicated to the society on the authority of its Committee, so late as last May, certainly is rather difficult to be reconciled with the statement of the Missionaries being driven from the island, and the Mission having proved a total failure. I am not acquainted precisely with the date of Lieut. Breton's work, but presume that he can hardly give more recent accounts than the Report to which I refer.

The statements made in that Report respecting several

of the settlements are interesting. That relating to one called Waimate may serve as a specimen. "An examination was held of our Schools at the Waimate; at which many natives from the distant residences, and who have formed schools in their villages, were present, and passed a very respectable examination in the catechisms, and some of them in reading the Scriptures. The Infant school, under the conduct of Mrs. Hamlin, gave very great satisfaction. From 800 to 1000 natives were present, and about 500 of them passed an examination. Our chapel on Sunday is crowded to excess, and the number of communicants has been doubled."

From Puriri, another station they write thus. "We are, I trust, in a sphere of much usefulness. Our schools are going on in a manner which affords us much encouragement; we have regularly the Adult, the Boys' and Girls' School every day in the week. The Infant school also is well attended: The mothers and even the grandmothers attend to be taught with the infants."

A further statement is made, which, while it goes to prove the general prosperity of the Mission, also goes to disprove the accusation that the Missionaries are neglectful of the means of promoting civilization. The arrival of a *Printing Press* is thus noticed. "The arrival of the Press, is, as we expected, hailed by our friends here as a memorable event for New Zealand: and as for the natives, those who assisted in bringing it ashore shouted and danced on the sand, when it was told it was "*ta pukapuka*" (a book-making machine.) There is an extraordinary demand for books all around."

The statement that not a single convert has been made is confronted, in these Reports, with particular accounts of the lives and deaths of sundry individuals from among the natives, who with dying lips have testified of their faith and happiness in the gospel: but these it is not necessary to transcribe at length. On the whole, as regards this particular mission, it seems unquestionable that the statements quoted from Lieut. Breton must be very erroneous.

As to Christian Missions in general, there appears no reason to doubt, that when judiciously conducted by men of genuine faith and piety, they are calculated to produce

incalculable benefit to the world. They come to benighted and wretched nations, offering civilization in one hand and Christianity in the other: two unparalleled gifts. If any one be inclined to think slightly of their actual results, let him at any rate take, in the first place, some little pains to inform himself what those results have been. He will find that in themselves they are neither few nor small, although they may appear so when compared with the magnitude of the work yet remaining to be accomplished. It would be sufficient to refer only to the many thousands of heathen children receiving education in christian schools, and to the already effected translation and circulation of the Scriptures, in more than a hundred languages in which but a few years ago not a sentence of them existed.

But it should be remembered that to evangelize the world is a great, a stupendous, undertaking. It cannot reasonably be regarded as less than a work of ages. How many centuries rolled on before the gospel had extended itself over what we now call christian nations! How gradual was its progress! And shall we allow ourselves to be desponding or censorious, because we do not see very extensive changes effected in a few years? We are unreasonable. The present efforts should rather be regarded as the sowing of the seed, and the harvest should not be expected till a more distant period. But assuming that which we are assured of, the substantial truth of the gospel, we may be certain that the harvest will not fail to come in its season. It is not necessary to reckon on supernatural aid, though that also may perhaps be vouchsafed: but even without it, the course of events and the prospects of the world point strongly and clearly at the universal diffusion of Christianity. This result, however, cannot be expected without the agency of proper means to produce it, and therefore it is that it is incumbent on all Christians, of whatever name, to bear their part in the labor of this common cause. The work itself will go on: the world will be evangelized: all nations will be blest with pure religion, and its attendant civilization. But not all Christians will have done themselves the honor of partaking in the work: some will have stood aloof, some will have derided, and some will even have opposed it. Those will be happy who have done their part, whether little or great, in helping

it on. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased: and they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have turned many to righteousness as the stars, for ever and ever."

That Unitarians have hitherto done but little in this work, is to be confessed and lamented. Doubtless their circumstances have in some respects been unfavorable: yet not so unfavorable but that they might have done much more than they have done, if their heart had been in it. It is pitiful, it is disgraceful, in so numerous and opulent a body to hear want of means even alluded to. How have the *really* poor Moravians supported their hundred missionaries? It is all delusion to imagine that the correction of errors at home is our more proper function. It is even ridiculous. The single fact that we appear thus indifferent to the common cause of Christianity, hinders our cause at home more than all our efforts can further it. And are we so wise in our own conceits that we can condescend to enlighten none but our fellow-christians? What does it mean but this, that while we are careless of the common cause of Christ, we expend all our zeal in sectarian dogmatism? God grant that a better day may be at hand, when those who are Christians with most *reason*, may not also seem to be those who have least *love*. The missionary spirit is a sort of *instinct* of true Christianity, which characterized it from the beginning. To be without it, is not to resemble Jesus, nor his apostles, nor his true followers, in any age.

B.

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#### THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.

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Resuming this subject from p. 242 of our last number, we observe, that the advocates of the views on which we have animadverted, do not, indeed, deny that the gospel is proposed to mankind in general terms. They grant that it is offered to all. Let us proceed on this admission. The grand treasures of Christianity, those, more particularly, of a final and endless nature, are open to all mankind. But this admission is qualified by a statement to the effect, that all cannot secure them. We cannot be believers in Christianity without admitting

a moral reason for the truth of this statement. A separation will, undoubtedly, be made between the righteous and the wicked, and the happiness of the former only shall he secure. But the disciples of Calvin found this statement upon a different basis—upon the arbitrary choice of the Supreme Being; a position which a correct estimate of his sacred character overturns. They are *called* who shall inherit everlasting life and happiness; and in order that this call to grace may be effectual, the influence of God works upon the hearts of the called, causes them to become truly acquainted with their spiritual state, makes them feel their wants and supplies them, crowns them with the success of final perseverance, and in an eternal scene of being bestows upon them the promised rewards of it. We may surely ask, Is not this a partial description of the providence and grace of God? Does it not give us cause to suspect his rectitude? can we welcome it, and regard Him at the same time as the Benefactor and Friend and Guardian of the *whole* human race? It is not necessary to our argument to admit or deny the reality of that influence upon the mind which is attributed to the saving grace of God. But there are reasons to convince us that it either exists not at all, or is universal in its operation.

We know that the happiness of mankind is an important object with God because we see and feel the proofs that he designed mankind to be happy. We can understand why he called so many beings into life the moment we form correct ideas of his adorable nature. But it is by no means so easy to discover satisfactory reasons for God's marring his own noble work, overturning his own benevolent plans, forming all mankind for happiness and plunging a portion thereof into irremediable misery and despair. The notions of Calvin seem to be founded upon the supposition that the happiness of one human being is of greater consequence than that of another in the divine estimation—can this be possible? Is it of consequence to the divine Governor whether I, who am opposed to the sentiments of Calvin, or my neighbour, who believes that they consists with the written word of God, be the happier of the two? or, to go farther, does he avail himself of this *difference of opinion* to elevate the one to the pinnacle of felicity and to sink the other to

that horrid condition in which the worm never dieth and the fire is not quenched?

Always admitting and asserting that the Governor of heaven and earth will establish a *moral* distinction between the creatures of his hands, and the rule he adopts is written in letters of flame upon the pages of revelation, we can recognize no principle of government, no decision of his will, which is not in accordance therewith. He must have an universal regard for his children of men. If he love one he must love all : if he desire the happiness of one he must desire the happiness of all. And since he is an infinitely perfect Being, since his veracity is unquestionable, his justice unimpeachable, we may feel the fullest confidence in the universality of his kindness and regard. He, in fact, can only do what is strictly and unalterably just and right. He cannot descend to a system of partiality, for this is repugnant to his holy nature ; and if it please Him to exert his influence in bringing any of his sons to glory, we are justified in asserting that such influence is extended to many and to all. To all he evinces his merciful regard. To all he dispatches the summons to wait upon the Lord Jesus, to hear his instructions and obey his commands ; to all he sends his offers of pardon upon repentance ; all he reminds of the awful responsibility they bear as accountable beings, and affectionately promises them the rich blessings of his love if they remain the attached and faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. And will he stop at this point ? Is it to be imagined that the sentence passed at the bar of judgment will be in opposition to these gracious messages, and a revocation of these sacred promises ? With what dismay must we hear and feel the change !

All the disciples of Christ have not bowed nor can they bow to the authority of Calvin. They reject his doctrines both because they are unscriptural and injurious to the character of God. We would say that some of these feel the energetic power of religion. They humbly and joyfully receive Jesus Christ as the chosen messenger, the Messiah of God. They revere his instructions, and admire and love himself. They perceive the justice and the wisdom of his requirements. He has not delivered one precept to which they do not attach value ; nor has he

unfolded and enlarged upon one doctrine which they do not receive as invested with a divine authority. They look to him as the great Teacher of eternal life, and to his death and resurrection as the grand evidence of such a state of being, and contemplate the time when they shall be summoned to his judgment and called upon to account for the talents confided to their use and to receive an equitable award. Inspect the feelings and trace the conduct of one of these men. There is in his heart a sincere love and reverence of God, an humble confidence in his justice and kindness, and a grateful desire to conform to his requirements and to live as he has appointed. Grateful for all the blessings he inherits from heaven, he is, in a particular manner, grateful for those views of religion which have expanded his mind and shed an inexpressible comfort and delight upon his heart, for the testimonies which revelation displays of the infinity of God's holiness and beneficence, and for the pledges it gives that his providence shall never withdraw its aid nor his grace its gladdening light and solace though life should be prolonged throughout eternity. Thus does he feel; and his conduct displays some of the fruits, at least, of piety and love. He is an obedient disciple of Jesus; and although his obedience is by no means perfect, he is gradually advancing more near to the standard of Christian duty and perfection. If he even injures a fellow creature or disobeys the divine lawgiver it is not without humbling reflections on his own weakness and an endeavour to repair the injury? and still he proceeds, the more intent upon his duty as he advances, exercising a more expansive love towards his brethren and cultivating a more spiritual and heavenly temper. In a word, the career of earthly duty and trial is closed in faith and hope. The scene changes from time to eternity, the books are opened, the judge is set, and he comes forward at the sound of that awful voice which wakes the dead from the sleep of ages.—What is his fate? Rejection? Misery? And this the issue, the dark and horrible issue of a well spent life, because his mind could not entertain the belief that the doings of God were partial and unjust, or place a bold and rash confidence in the infinite merits of another? Then let the book of grace be sealed for ever, nor mock the rational offspring of God with a hollow form of rewarded

'virtue ! Let the voice of wisdom be silent in the streets, and the silver tongue of religion no longer cause its words to vibrate through our hearts ! But no. Divine justice forbids. *The righteous hath hope in his death* ; and that hope shall freshen and blossom and bear fruit when life is renewed in a happier clime. He who calls his creatures from the four winds of heaven will not reject them and utterly cast them off when they obey his call.

W.

### ON CONFESSION OF SIN.

The Christian religion is essentially a dispensation of mercy and salvation to *sinners*. It is addressed to men directly and peculiarly in this character. We know that it fully recognises and often appeals to other characters in mankind, distinct from, but not inconsistent with, this character of sinners. For instance, it is clearly addressed to men as rational beings. It every where supposes them to be gifted with a spirit of understanding, endowed with the faculty of reason, and therefore capable of discriminating and judging on questions of truth and error, even on high questions pertaining to the existence, the attributes, the providence and will, of the All-wise and Almighty God. So again, the gospel uniformly presumes that all men are possessed of natural capabilities of moral and religious obedience, with power of conscience and susceptibility of devotion; and it abounds with the most solemn appeals to these moral faculties of human nature. Undoubtedly, therefore, the Christian dispensation is based on the recognition that men are, by their original constitution, and even, to some extent, in their actual character, rational, moral, and religious creatures. Still, no one can attentively study this religion, as it is communicated in the Scriptures, without feeling that it is addressed to men especially and pointedly as *sinners*. It is delivered to us, by its inspired teachers, as to those who, under the influence of some moral infirmities or sinful propensities, have in various degrees wickedly abused, or culpably failed to improve, our higher capacities of reason and moral discernment. It treats us peculiarly as accountable beings

who have transgressed ; as children of God who are more or less alienated from Him, by the prevalence of sinful dispositions in our hearts and sinful habits in our lives. Consistently with this, it calls upon us, as its first and most urgent command, to *repent* and turn unto God. It promises no blessings but on these conditions. It sets forth repentance and regeneration, spiritual newness of heart and life, as the great, primary, essential change required in our own moral condition. In connection with this change, indeed, but *only* in connection with it and consequent upon it, the Christian religion promises the forgiveness of sins, and supplies the means of attaining to a complete, settled, blissful enjoyment of the divine approbation. Therefore, the Christian religion is peculiarly addressed to men considered as sinful creatures. Its great object is to save us from our sins. It is essentially a dispensation of mercy, forgiveness, redemption ; and although it clearly assumes and recognises the existence of other and better qualities in men, (without which, indeed, they could have no sin,) such as a rational judgment, a moral sense, and capacities of spiritual intercourse with God, yet it is to their purification and recovery from *sin* that all the most proper influences of this religion are directed.

This is a point of some consequence, towards a sound apprehension of the true character and object of Christianity. It is a subject on which the utmost confusion of thought prevails, and the most opposite extravagancies of opinion are entertained. One class of believers in the gospel will assure us, that this divine religion is scarcely, if at all, addressed to men as rational beings, or beings free to use their reason, and naturally capable of serving God in the practice of righteousness ; that on the contrary, it uniformly treats them solely in the character of condemned sinners, as creatures in whom the powers of reason and conscience are utterly corrupted, perverted, depraved. This is one extravagance of doctrine on the subject ; and one for the correction of which, to an unprejudiced mind, it is simply necessary to open the Scriptures, where almost every line contains some direct appeal to the understanding, or to the moral judgment and moral sensibilities, of the human soul. But on the other hand, a certain class of believers in the gospel are so jealous

of the dignity of reason ; they are so impressed with the conviction that the Christian religion does deal with men as beings free to use their understanding, and naturally capable of virtue and piety ; they are so very eager to maintain this truth against all assailants, that they are too apt to overlook the fact that, nevertheless, the gospel is *principally* addressed to men in their character of sinners. Its leading design is to recover and preserve us from wickedness, by clearer revelations of the moral government and moral judgments of God ; by the most affecting assurances of the Divine forgiveness, to all who sincerely embrace the covenant of mercy through faith in Jesus Christ ; by the most abundant supplies of spiritual aid and succour in working out our own salvation. The gospel, therefore, treats all men as being, previous to their reception of this grace and mercy of God, in a state of moral condemnation, because, as the apostles Paul justly argues, all " are concluded under sin," and the true, proper, peculiar aim of the gospel, is to deliver men out of this state of condemnation, through the remission of their sins ; by abolishing the penalty of sins actually committed, and destroying the existence of sin in their hearts and lives.

This especial purpose of the gospel, we think, some believers appear almost entirely to neglect, in their eagerness to defend it against the reproach of being altogether a gloomy and irrational system of faith. They are so zealous to maintain their privileges as rational beings, that they seem too often to forget that they are also sinful beings, and that in this character expressly they are addressed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, with a view not to teach them to reason, but to move them to repentance and reformation. This is the other extravagance of error to which we alluded ; and thus it is that, in opinions, as in other things, extremes beget extremes. But this error, if suffered to flow out into all its practical consequences, is no less injurious than the other. It may lead to the substituting of a vain spirit of speculation and disputation concerning points of doctrine, in the place of yielding up the heart, in a spirit of true penitence and humility, to the holy, regenerating, moral influences of the gospel. We should be careful to avoid both errors. Whilst we adhere sted-

fastly to our rights, yea rather to our duties, as beings endowed with reason and moral discrimination, and therefore at full liberty, yea rather obliged, in opposition alike to our own prejudices and to the prejudices and delusions of our fellow men, to "prove all things and hold fast that which is good," even on questions which pertain to the true sense of the Scriptures and the true principles of God's word,—whilst we stedfastly maintain this course, let us never lose sight of the solemn consideration, that the religion we have embraced was chiefly designed to redeem us from the power of sin, and establish us in holiness, through the mercy of God vouchsafed in Jesus Christ our Lord. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

There are many doctrines and precepts of Christianity, for the elucidation of which it is necessary to keep in mind this just view of its essential nature. We would apply it at present to the interesting subject of the *confession of sin*.

The natural and Christian duty of the *confession of sin*, as it is inculcated in the Scriptures, is a very plain and comprehensive duty. It is chargeable with no degree or semblance of superstition; though superstitions of the grossest kind have been connected with it, as we may have further occasion to observe presently. The duty springs, in the most natural manner, out of our moral condition and moral relations to God. To a sinful heart, brought to a due sense of its general or particular moral infirmities, it is as natural to confess sin, as it is for a grateful heart to pour forth its thanksgivings, or an afflicted heart to utter supplication.

But in order to ensure the existence of this feeling in the mind, the true nature of sin, *religiously considered*, must be well pondered and well understood. It should be remembered always, that confession of sin is peculiarly a religious duty. Some persons, viewing this subject, as they have thought, in the light of reason and philosophy, have represented confession as very absurd;—and so perhaps it may appear, if we view the subject merely, exclusively, in the light of reason and speculative philosophy, apart from all connection with sincere religious faith and religious sentiment. Many of our commonest daily acts

would appear equally absurd, if we were to take such partial, one-sided views of them, in fact leaving altogether out of sight the very considerations which alone make them natural and proper. But it is a common error, with men of hasty and superficial judgment, to pronounce certain actions unreasonable, only because they cannot be traced up immediately to some dictate of reason, because they cannot be shewn to arise immediately and purely from the suggestions of the reasoning faculties of our minds. This is surely a mistake, and the error of it may be easily illustrated. How many acts of tenderness and endearment does a good parent, a mother for instance, perform towards her child, which do not arise in the slightest degree from the dictates of reason, but entirely from the impulses of a spontaneous maternal affection for her offspring. Are those actions therefore unreasonable, are they absurd, only because they have their immediate origin, not in reason, but in that which is mightier and holier than reason, love ? No ; the doctrine itself, which would bewilder our minds with such a subtlety, is pre-eminently absurd. So it is, then, with the earnest and penitent confession of sin. It is a religious duty, arising out of our religious obligations and relations to God, regarded both as our heavenly Father and as our moral Governor and Judge. Therefore, in order that this duty may be effectually discharged, sin, our own personal sin, must be viewed under its religious aspects, that we may be deeply sensible of the guilt and heinousness which belong to it, when thus contemplated. Our hardness of heart towards God must be softened and subdued, that we may feel how unjustifiable, how ungrateful, how awful a thing it is, to break His commandments. We must meditate on the shameful nature of sin, the danger, and the degradation and the misery, which belong to it, according to the teaching of the Scriptures ; for they treat the subject of sin, not speculatively, or philosophically, but practically, delineating its true moral and religious qualities.

CHRISTIANUS.

## PROPOSED PLAN FOR A LIBERAL UNION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

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[The want of some means for promoting a more intimate connexion and union among the churches of liberal Dissenters in this kingdom, is very generally acknowledged. It seems plain that none of the old or existing forms of Church Union are agreeable to the members of our societies. We are sensible of the difficulties to be overcome in this case, but candid discussion and a spirit of zeal may overcome them. The following outlines of a plan have been sent to us from a quarter entitled to much respect, and we lay them before our readers for approval or correction. Our pages are open for friendly discussion on the subject. ED.]

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## PROPOSED PLAN OF UNION OR FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES IN GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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**PRINCIPLES.**—1. Divine authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

2. Right and duty of private judgment in their interpretation, and unlawfulness of imposing any sort of creed or articles of faith other than the Scripture, for any purpose whatever.

3. Expediency of conducting public worship, as far as possible, on common and undisputed principles, without however suppressing the just expression of private opinion, as such.

**OBJECT.**—To unite, strengthen, and multiply Christian churches founded on these principles.

**RULES.**—1. Churches to resolve to join in a Union with the foregoing name and principles.

2. To form in each a Fellowship Fund, of Subscribers not below a certain amount, (say 4*s.* per annum.)

3. A certain portion, (say half,) of the receipts of the particular Fellowship Fund to be transferred to a common or Union Fund.

4. An Annual Meeting of Ministers and Deputies, (or Elders,) from the several churches in Union to meet for conference, and the disposal of this Fund.

5. Number of Deputies from each church to be proportioned to the amount of contribution, (say 2 and upwards.)

6. Fund to be applied in assistance of such churches in union as may need—any part not so required to other congenial objects—as assistance to education of young ministers, &c.

7. Churches to agree not to introduce important changes in their internal arrangements without consulting the Annual Meeting: and if they should not follow its advice to assign their reasons, by their deputation, at the next meeting.

8. Churches not to appoint ministers permanently without consulting the annual meeting—but not to be bound to follow its advice.

9. The annual Meeting to appoint a Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary.

10. The place of annual meeting to vary, a sermon to be preached, after which the ministers, deputies, and friends from the several churches, to hold social and brotherly intercourse.

11. All applications for assistance to be made in writing to the Secretary, with statement of the case, at least one month before the annual meeting.

12. The Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary, to form a council, with power, in cases of particular emergency, to call a Special General Meeting of Ministers and Deputies—but only for special business.

#### THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER—No. XIV.

*Romans viii, vs. 28—31.*

“*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*”

This language has been entirely misunderstood. From these declarations of the apostle, many have thought themselves warranted in speaking with great boldness of

the eternal decrees of God, concerning the predestination of individual men to final and everlasting salvation. By a fair examination of Scripture, it may be shown that such is not the apostle's meaning. It is sufficient briefly to explain, that the apostle is not here treating of the final and eternal destiny of individuals, but only of the present spiritual privileges of nations and classes of men. The Jews, in their prejudice and pride, objected to the Gentiles being regarded as true children of God, entitled to all the advantages of a state of grace, even though they should sincerely believe in and practice the gospel of Jesus Christ. This arrogant prejudice, this blind bigotry, the apostle opposes, as he was bound to do. He maintains the moral equality, and the true spiritual adoption, of all who, according to the purposes of God ordained from the beginning of the world, were now called to embrace the Christian faith. He intimates, agreeably to his favourite doctrine, which he has delivered in other parts of his writings, that this calling of the Gentiles, this election of people of all nations to enjoy the blessings of the gospel, which was such a stumbling block to the Jews, had always been the settled purpose of the divine counsels; and as such it had been foretold by the ancient prophets. This is what he means by saying, that "whom God foreknew he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;" that is, to be followers of Christ, to be received into the christian church, as true and acceptable believers. "And whom he did predestinate, them he also called;"—he caused the gospel to be preached to them, and thus gave them the means of salvation. "And whom he called, them he also justified;" all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who listen to the merciful invitations of God, and embrace the gospel, are thereupon treated as pardoned and accepted persons, they are justified from their past sins, and received into favour, through faith in Christ Jesus. "And whom he justified, them he also glorified";—this is commonly understood to declare the future exaltation of believers to heavenly glory and happiness, and so is interpreted of the final purposes of God; as though the apostle had said, "he will glorify them hereafter." But we must confess, that we are strongly inclined to think he is still speaking of the present, actual condition of the followers of Christ.

The believers were “glorified,” when they were distinguished by such tokens of God’s especial goodness and approbation towards them; and particularly when they were favoured with the miraculous gifts of the holy spirit. Both in the Old and in the New Testament Scriptures, the chosen people of God are said to be glorified by him, when they are blessed with some striking and peculiar evidences of his divine favour. We apprehend, therefore, that this passage altogether is without any reference to the eternal salvation of individual believers, and that such an application of it is a dangerous perversion of its original meaning. It refers to the spiritual calling, condition, and privileges of Christian believers in general; and so understood, it yields a sense which is very pertinent to the context, and to the prevailing argument of the epistle.

“What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”—This is the happy, the consolatory reflection, which the apostle makes upon the considerations which have been thus briefly noticed. Since it had pleased God to receive and justify all that sincerely believed in Jesus Christ, how little had they to fear from the condemnation of men. Of what consequence was the bigoted railing and the furious opposition of their unbelieving enemies, when they had every reason to feel assured that they were objects of divine complacency?

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“*The Future Life. A Sermon preached on Easter Sunday, 1834, in the Federal Street Church, Boston.—By WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D.D. London: J. Mardon, 7, Farringdon Street, Holborn Bridge. 1836.*”

It might well be supposed that the subject of a “Future Life” was one on which it would be almost impossible for any thing new to be said. But Dr. Channing is a writer who can hardly discourse upon any topic, however trite, without uttering many original and striking thoughts. This sermon contains some very pleasing views of the probable experience of the pious dead, when they enter upon the joys of heaven; of their blissful communion with God, and with Christ; and of the affectionate interest which they may be supposed still to take in the condition of the

beloved friends whom they have left behind them in this world. We cannot be surprised that the author, as his prefatory note informs us, was often importuned to publish this sermon by afflicted persons, mourning the death of kindred. It is calculated to afford much consolation to persons in such circumstances. These, which follow, are animating thoughts ;—

" In regard to the happiness of the intercourse of the future state, all of you, I trust, can form some comprehensions of it. If we have ever known the enjoyments of friendship, of entire confidence, of co-operation in honourable and successful labors with those we love, we can comprehend something of the felicity of a world, where souls, refined from selfishness, open as the day, thirsting for new truth and virtue, endued with new power of enjoying the beauty and grandeur of the universe, allied in the noblest work of benevolence, and continually discovering new mysteries of the Creator's power and goodness, communicate themselves to one another with freedom and perfect love. The closest attachments of this life are cold, distant, stranger-like, compared with theirs. How they communicate themselves, by what language or organs, we know not. But this we know, that in the progress of the mind, its power of imparting itself must improve. The eloquence, the thrilling, inspiring tones, in which the good and noble sometimes speak to us on earth, may help us to conceive the expressiveness, harmony, energy of the language in which superior beings reveal themselves above. Of what they converse we can better judge. They, who enter that world, meet beings, whose recollections extend through ages, who have met together perhaps from various worlds, who have been educated amidst infinite varieties of condition, each of whom has passed through his own discipline and reached his own peculiar form of perfection, and each of whom is a peculiar testimony to the providence of the Universal Father. What treasures of memory, observation, experience, imagery, illustration, must enrich the intercourse of Heaven ! One angel's history may be a volume of more various truth than all the records of our race.—After all, how little can our present experience help us to understand the intercourse of Heaven, a communion, marred by no consciousness of sin, trustful as childhood, and overflowing with innocent joy, a communion, in which the noblest feelings spring fresh from the heart, in which pure beings give familiar utterance to their divinest inspirations, to the Wonder which perpetually springs up amidst this ever unfolding and ever mysterious universe, to the raptures of adoration and pious gratitude, and to the swellings of a sympathy which cannot be confined.

We select also the eloquent peroration :—

" The views now given of the future state should make it an object of deep interest, earnest hope, constant pursuit. Heaven is, in truth, a glorious reality. Its attraction should be felt perpetually. It should overcome the force with which this world draws us to itself. Were there a country on earth, uniting all that

is beautiful in nature, all that is great in virtue, genius, and the liberal arts, and numbering among its citizens, the most illustrious patriots, poets, philosophers, philanthropists of our age, how eagerly should we cross the ocean to visit it ! And how immeasurably greater is the attraction of Heaven ! There, live the elder brethren of the creation of our race ; there is the great and good of all ages and climes ; the friends, benefactors, deliverers, ornaments of their race ; the patriarch, prophet, apostle, and martyr ; the true heroes of public and still more of private life ; the father, mother, wife, husband, child, who, unrecorded by man, have walked before God in the beauty of love and self-sacrificing virtue. There are all who have built up in our hearts the power, goodness and truth, the writers, from whose pages we have received the inspiration of pure and lofty sentiments, the friends, whose countenances have shed light through our dwellings, and peace and strength through our hearts. There they are gathered together, safe from every storm, triumphant over evil ;—and they say to us, Come and join us in our everlasting blessedness ; Come and bear part in our song of praise ; Share our adoration, friendship, progress, and works of love. They say to us, Cherish now in your earthly life that spirit and virtue of Christ, which is the beginning and dawn of Heaven, and we shall soon welcome you, with more than human friendship, to our own immortality. Shall that voice speak to us in vain ? Shall our worldliness and unforsaken sins, separate us, by a gulf which cannot be passed, from the society of Heaven”

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*“The Nature and Grounds of Love to Christ considered, in a Sermon. By GEORGE LEE, Jun. Hull : W. Stephenson. London : J. Mardon, Farringdon Street.*

Mr. Lee, in this earnest discourse, has laboured with judgment and ability to remove a very unfounded prejudice entertained against Unitarian views of the gospel. He has shewn, we think, most successfully, that the rational, fervent, practical love of Christ, is a sentiment which may and ought to be warmly cherished by all sincere believers in the reality of his character and history, as delineated in the Scriptures, without regard to any metaphysical notions concerning his nature. The sermon is well adapted for circulation by our tract societies.—

“I go on to evince the reasonableness of loving Christ. Much need not be said upon this point. To state the duty, is to enforce its obligation. As no command from God could compel men to it, for the passions and emotions which reign in the soul, do not by volition—it is the pressure of outward circumstances that calls them forth into action—so, if the mind is not self-

disposed to see the reasonableness of the thing, it would be hopeless to seek to win it over by argument. But still it is well to say a few words on this part of our subject, if it be only to linger a moment on a pleasing theme. Are we, in any case, susceptible of love? And does the bestowment of ineffable blessings call for a return of gratitude? Is it not fitting that we should love the Lord Jesus? Until a man can be found, who disavows this emotion as a weakness, formal argument in proof of what I have said, would be a waste of time. Do hardships and sufferings, endured without the remotest prospect of self-aggrandisement, claim our thankfulness; where so signal an instance of disinterested affection as in the man of Calvary? He was indeed, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*—he had *not where to lay his head*—*he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*—he was the victim of every indignity that ingenious malice could invent, and all on our behalf, to redeem us from the bondage of sin, to *purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*. Do high endowments, dedicated without the feeblest symptom of pride, to the welfare of others, challenge our love and gratitude—behold the *Son of God* consenting to remain in the lowest indigence; *though he was rich*, invested with miraculous powers, beyond what were given to any other man, *for our sakes he became poor*; he bore with our infirmities—he stooped to our weaknesses, and knelt to the lowest offices of humanity. *Being in the form of God*, rich in tokens of divine favour, the ambassador from heaven on a mission of unspeakable interest, *he took upon him the form of a servant*; he, who might have summoned legions of angels to his aid, submitted meekly to the malice of his enemies, and finally to the death of the cross. Here my friends, are combined all possible claims to love and gratitude: the constant, self-denying benefactor; the indulgent, patient teacher; the dying friend. Here is the realisation of those pictures of perfect goodness, which moralists have ever loved to delineate, and which had not Jesus appeared, we should have regarded as fictions of the imagination. *The Life of Jesus* is set before us, if not for our imitation, at least for our esteem and love.

“It was God that put it into the heart of Jesus thus to labour and die for us. But what then? The great revolutions that change the face of society, are all ordered by God; yet he uses, in their accomplishment, the agency of men, accountable to him hereafter for all their deeds. Some are more willing agents than others; some are more faithful to their trust than their companions; but their merit or demerit is their own. How God worketh in us, we cannot tell; how, in the course of his providence, he raises up fitting instruments, is past finding out; but so it is; it does not behove us to know: it is ours only to act well the part assigned.”

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

For some time past, we have not taken any especial notice in these pages of the course of public affairs ; but various circumstances incline us to resume our observations on this subject. The state of public business is highly interesting at this moment. Some very important measures are in progress through the legislature ; and we seem to be again fast approaching a *crisis* in our national concerns, towards which every mind, warmly attached to the cause of social reform and improvement, must look with strong hope, not altogether unmixed with anxiety.

The laws passed in the last session of Parliament for the Registration of births, deaths and marriages, and for the celebration of Marriage amongst dissenters, have been suspended for several months, by an especial Act for that purpose. The cause of this proceeding is understood to be, that the execution of these laws being connected with the machinery of the Poor Law Amendment Act, which is not yet in operation in all parts of the kingdom, it was absolutely necessary to have further time for preparation. This was certainly the case in many places. We have personal knowledge of one instance in which, where there is a population of thirty or forty thousand inhabitants, the laws could not have been carried into effect at present, from the want of functionaries and arrangements which, owing to unforeseen difficulties, there had not been time to appoint. We should be glad to see this opportunity seized upon to make some alterations in the laws themselves ; and if our memory serves us correctly, there are notices to this effect laid before the House of Commons, by Mr. Wilkes or other members. The disagreeable provisions, which require the notice of marriage to be published by the Guardians of the Poor, (probably at the Work House of the Union,) and which make it necessary that a Registrar should be present at all marriages celebrated in dissenting places of worship, ought if possible to be abolished. Some better arrangement should likewise be made to ensure the registration of all births, which appears to us a great defect in the new law as it stands at present.

The question of Church Rates continues to excite much attention in Parliament, and throughout the country.

Petitions for the entire abolition of this obnoxious impost are daily presented in great numbers to both Houses. The orthodox dissenters have had a formidable meeting of delegates on the subject in London, who marched in grand procession to besiege the ministers at Whitehall. In opposition to this movement the zealous supporters of the Church have held meetings, and formed themselves into societies, for resisting, as they say, any measure for the abolition of Church Rates which shall be found to compromise the principle of a national Establishment. Not the least curious incident connected with this subject, was the speech of Earl Fitzwilliam, in presenting petitions to the House of Peers for the total abolition of Church Rates. His Lordship declared it to be his opinion, that there ought to be sacred edifices maintained in all parts of the land, by a public tax, to which the poorest of the king's subjects might have a right to resort for the worship of God ; but he hoped to see the time, when all the leading religious sects of the country shall be allowed in turn to enjoy the use of these buildings ; and he thinks that, if in any parish the members of any other sect exceed those of the episcopalians, that sect should there be allowed the principal use of the Church, as being the majority. This latter idea, as far as we are aware, is quite an original suggestion ; the former notion, that of all sects sharing the use of the parish Church in turn, is said to have been suggested in a pamphlet written by Dr. Arnold of Rugby. The Bishop of Exeter seems to think it would make the Church too much like Noah's Ark, where all kinds of beasts and noises were mingled together in strange confusion. For our own parts, though we have not the remotest conception that any such plan would be practicable at present, yet we think it approaches much more nearly to the only just *principle* of a national Church Establishment, than the existing state of things; since it would give the whole community, without reference to their theological opinions, the benefit of the religious edifices maintained at the national expence.

The great struggle of political parties, as usual for many years, is now again centered upon Irish affairs. The measure for the reform of municipal corporations in that country has been renewed by the Government, and is

again resisted violently by the Tory opposition. The immediate result must probably be the resignation of the ministry, or the dissolution of Parliament, or both; though how these steps can lead to any ultimate change of policy, it is very difficult to conjecture. One thing is rendered quite plain by the recent debates in Parliament. It is clear that the real struggle is for the maintenance of the Irish Church Establishment, with undiminished ascendancy, and with all its enormous abuses. It is the fear of weakening the Church which is the secret motive, or rather at length the avowed motive, of all the opposition which is made to the granting of equal laws and free institutions to Ireland. Every thing is to be sacrificed to the support of Protestant ascendancy,—that old and hateful scourge of the sister kingdom. This is certainly not placing the Irish church in a very enviable light before the minds of the British people. We had thought it odious enough before; but now it is to be regarded, on the word of its most enthusiastic admirers, as the great obstacle to all just and good government in Ireland. The Church, it seems, will not be safe, if the Irish people are permitted to have the management of their own local affairs. The Church, nevertheless, must be maintained, at all costs and all hazards. From the language of this party, we might be led to suppose that the chief end of all civil government, was to uphold a certain kind of ecclesiastical establishment in every country, to provide support for the clergy who teach a particular creed, although church, clergy, and creed, are all heartily disliked by seven eighths of the people. Truly, this is a suitable theory of government for Englishmen in the nineteenth century.

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#### SOMERSET AND DORSET ASSOCIATION.

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A meeting of the Association will be held at Taunton, on Good Friday, March 24th. It is requested that the Members will be numerous in their attendance, as some arrangements are to be made for the future government of the Association.

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL. IV.

## THE TEACHING AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST SUITABLE TO THE PROFESSED DESIGN OF HIS MISSION.

To a serious and reflecting mind, the doctrine, works, and character of Jesus Christ, afford almost innumerable subjects of thought. They may be contemplated from many different points of view, and from all points may be found deeply interesting. But there is, especially, one way of considering them which has often produced in our own minds a strong and pleasing conviction of their divine excellence; and in this light we shall now endeavour to present them to the minds of our readers. It is that of *their exceeding suitableness to the professed design of his mission*. We are fully conscious of being indebted to other and superior writers for many of the particular thoughts which we shall now have to express; but we are not aware that they have often been concentrated on the same general point of view.

What was the principal avowed object of our Lord's mission? No doubt, that this also may be viewed and represented somewhat differently, by minds which happen to be variously impressed as to the relative importance of the different purposes effected by the ministry of Christ. But surely no person, acquainted with the Scriptures and believing in their contents, will hesitate to acknowledge that it was a grand design of our Saviour's mission, as understood and declared by himself, to establish in the world *a universal dispensation of religion*,—a religion for all nations and all ages. This was so frequently intimated by himself, and in so many forms of expression, that it admits, as we think, of no reasonable denial. He shewed himself, from the beginning, to be of a spirit which embraced all the human family, without respect of times, persons, or countries. His words and his actions alike prove that he was conscious of no limitation to the pur-

poses of his mission, short of those which God may have made, or may please to make, to his creation of such moral and accountable beings as mankind.

Our present inquiry, then, is concerning the adaptation of the teaching and character of Jesus to this professed design of his mission. We must allow it to have been a perfectly original design, and one surpassingly difficult to be accomplished. It certainly required a degree both of wisdom and of goodness, which we can hardly suppose to have belonged to any mere self-guided mortal; and least of all, to one who had been born and educated under the peculiarly narrow dispensation of the Jews.

We must, therefore, consider the manner in which our Lord, by his whole teaching and conduct, sought to carry this design into execution. This, it will be seen, is quite a distinct consideration. The discussion of this topic is necessary, however, in order to prove that Christ was endowed with the wisdom essential to the accomplishment of so divine a purpose, as well as with the goodness that might prompt him to the undertaking. It is very conceivable that he might be possessed of the one, and yet be destitute of the other. Wisdom and benevolence, wisdom and piety even, do not always go together, in such equal degrees of perfection. Jesus of Nazareth might from the purest and most generous motives, have entertained the wish to extend the benefits of true religion to all mankind by one general dispensation, and yet, so soon as he entered upon the good work, he might have displayed his incapacity for it in some fatal particular. It might have been made evident that he did not understand human nature, in all its depth and breadth, but only man as he was exhibited partially, under the influence of some peculiar circumstances. It might have been seen that he could not distinguish between what was locally useful or useful for a time only, and that which is essential to the spiritual perfection of human character. Is there any such defect to be charged upon the religion of Jesus Christ? We say with confidence that no such charge can be substantiated. This may be supposed, indeed, by those who will persist in taking their ideas of Christianity from some one or more of the many systems of faith and

discipline with which the name of Christianity has been associated;—for these undoubtedly have been, in most cases, deplorably encumbered with peculiarities both of opinion and of practice, which, if useful at all, were suited only to particular times and circumstances. But this is not a fair way of judging on the subject. We claim that, in this respect peculiarly, where the very character of his religion is to be decided on, our heavenly Master shall be judged by his own words and actions. We appeal from the theological and ecclesiastical systems of his followers, to his own simple teaching, and his own conduct, as recorded by his faithful historians in the Scriptures.

Let it first be observed what is the character of the gospel dispensation, according to the teaching of Christ, in regard to fixed and positive *institutions*, in regard to *observances* at all partaking of a ceremonial nature. It is impossible that a religion abounding with such observances, or laying any essential stress on them, should be fitted for universal reception. There is a difference in the physical condition and habits of men in different climates of the world,—there is a changeableness in the views and customs of human society in different periods of the world,—which makes it impossible that any but the fewest and simplest appointments of this nature should belong to a religion suited for all ages and all nations. How admirably, then, is the pure gospel of Christ qualified in this respect to become a universal religion. Let us contemplate Christianity, for this purpose, as Protestants in general understand it, without, on the one hand, disputing the correctness of those views in which all Protestants are agreed respecting its positive institutions, or, on the other hand, including any points on which they differ. How few and how simple they are! A plain initiatory rite by the application of water; and a solemn remembrance of Christ by partaking together bread and wine in brotherly communion. This is all. No endless and wearisome repetitions. No peculiarities of clime or country. No pomp of outward circumstances. All is plain and easy, practicable to all men, in all places. And then consider how marvellous this was, in one who had been born a member of the Jewish community, a disciple of Moses, whose religion abounded with numerous and bur-

densome ceremonies. What enabled Christ to know that the religion which he should seek to introduce for the universal homage of mankind was to be so different from that which, speaking of him humanly and naturally, must have been associated with his earliest and his constant thoughts, invested with all the sacredness of divine authority? Here we surely discern the great wisdom of our Saviour's character.

But let us quit this topic, and observe also what is the character of the gospel, according to the teaching of Christ, in regard to its *doctrines*. Here seems another ground on which we may judge of its fitness to be presented to all the world, to be received and established in all ages. The religion which is designed for these uses, should have a character of universality about the doctrines which it promulgates for the settled belief of all men. It should be characterised by broad, general, comprehensive views of moral and divine things. It should not only be true, but its truths should be of the simplest kind,—plain, few, and universal. They must be such as harmonize with the permanent dictates of the human understanding and conscience,—such as are adapted to take a strong hold of the abiding convictions and affections of the human soul. They may, indeed, and if they really proceed from the Fountain of heavenly wisdom, they certainly will, “have in them the germ of other truths and consequences which men will be enabled to draw from them, and to apply to their own religious improvement, with a greater or less degree of soundness, according to their circumstances in other respects,—according as they are in other respects ignorant or enlightened.” But in the mean time the doctrines of the religion itself, the faith which it positively imparts to its believers as necessary to discipleship, will be of the simplest and the most comprehensive description. This, we may humbly presume to say, should be the character of a religion designed to be universal. But we may safely declare that to frame such a religion is beyond the power, is above the wisdom, of the unaided, uninspired human mind, at least in any circumstances of the world which have yet existed. That it is so, would appear to be proved in the clearest manner by what has actually occurred, in the reception of the Christian religion amongst men. It

would seem to be the hardest thing possible for men to entertain the great, essential truths of religion in complete simplicity, without joining and mingling them with other matters, with opinions, which have their foundation entirely either in the individual's own peculiar state of mind, or in the peculiar state of knowledge and feeling belonging to the age in general. Humanly speaking, it would seem to be unavoidable, that the simple truths of religion should be modified, and oftentimes greatly distorted by the medium into which they are received and through which they pass, in becoming the actual opinions of particular men. This is the testimony of all experience, even under the Christian dispensation. Now, any such defect as this in the teaching of Christ, would have been fatal to his pretensions, as the divine Instructor of all ages and all nations. It would have destroyed that character of universality which is plainly essential to the instructions of one sent from God to teach all mankind the way of heavenly truth, to be a light to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. But it is clear to our minds that there is no such imperfection, there is no such fault, in the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. His instructions seem to be, they are felt to be, directed to universal human nature. "The great principles of religious faith," it has been said "not modified as they might suit Jew or Gentile, this age or that, but as they are required by man in the essential attributes of his moral being, stand forth in the teaching of our Saviour, alone, apart, unadorned, unveiled, in severe and grand simplicity." We have known a person absolutely to stumble and take offence at this extreme simplicity of the teaching of Jesus Christ;—not discerning that what he made a ground of objection was in truth the highest commendation of the genuine gospel: We have known a person take up the New Testament, and read the four Gospels, with the professed view of learning what Jesus taught; and to close the book with a peevish complaint that he taught nothing, nothing definitely and completely. Yet it is impossible to deny that Jesus has taught the existence, the unity, and the perfections of the only true God,—the universality of his care and providence over creation,—his moral government over men, who are his moral and

accountable offspring,—the necessity of holiness, the necessity and sufficiency of repentance, to secure the merciful forgiveness of God and his paternal regard to all sinners,—the permanent obligations of love to him and to all mankind,—the certainty of future judgment and retribution, the certainty of a resurrection of all men to immortality. It is quite impossible to deny that Jesus has taught all these things. And so great is the native power of these simple truths, and so impressively are they taught by our Saviour, that they are sufficient fully to satisfy the spiritual desires of every serious and single-hearted man. But all this, forsooth, is nothing ! Yes, nothing to a mind that is craving to have its religious curiosity satisfied, or to have its favourite wishes confirmed, on a number of unimportant and speculative points of belief. Let such a man, if he will, go to the study of the numerous systems of dogmatic theology which abound in the Christian world, and it is hard if amongst them all he cannot find some one to suit his peculiar taste ;—though, in our humble opinion, he may employ his time to much better purpose. But this teaching of Christ, which by some minds is thought to be nothing, to *human creatures*, regarded simply as such, is every thing ; it is every thing to *men*, universally considered, as mortal, sinful and accountable beings. And this universality in the character and spirit of our Lord's teaching is his glory, his testimonial, as a Teacher sent from God to instruct all mankind.

In this place, moreover, we may take occasion to observe, that this same characteristic belongs, in a great degree, not to the doctrines or truths merely which our Saviour taught, but likewise to the manner in which he has explained and enforced them. With such exceptions as were probably quite necessary to make his instructions understood by the Jewish people, there is a character of universality in the very illustrations by which he seeks to make these truths clearly known. His teaching is distinguished in this respect even from the teaching of most of his own apostles. This is the principal cause of that plainness which is commonly felt to belong to the contents of the four Gospels, to the discourses of Jesus as recorded by the evangelists, in comparison with the obscurity of the epistles. It is not that there is any doctrine in the one

which does not exist in the other ;—but only that the style of teaching in the one is universal, in the other, oftentimes, it is particular. There is very little which is peculiarly Jewish, or peculiarly local and temporary in any way, in the form and dress of our Saviour's instructions. If he points for illustration to scenes and objects immediately before him, it is generally to such scenes and objects as, with trifling changes, exist every where and always. He bids his hearers behold the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field, and the clouds in the morning and evening sky, and other universal appearances and objects in nature. How eternally interesting and affecting are the parables of Christ, chiefly from this cause, that their story is founded upon some essential, unchangeable relations of human life and society ; as for instance, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, founded on the essential relations between parent and child, and the universal errors and frailties of the youthful mind. Therefore it is that these parables of our Lord are as well understood, and may be as deeply felt now, as in the age when they were first delivered. This circumstance gives an unchangeable interest, an everlasting freshness, to the teaching of Christ.

We are brought now, to the last consideration which we shall discuss at present. It is a very important consideration. It relates to the personal character of our Lord Jesus Christ. We maintain that his character was of a universal cast, in all its leading features :—it was universal goodness and piety. Are we quite understood in this ? If so, we fear no contradiction, no dissent from the truth of what we affirm. How can we describe that moral excellence which was exhibited in the character of Christ, by referring to any known standard of excellence ? We cannot do it. Where shall we class this character ? With what particular modification of human virtue and piety shall we assign its place ? We cannot do so. There is no class to which it belongs. There is no particular form of moral goodness known amongst men to which it can be justly likened. It is not the character merely of a zealous and pious Jew ; that would have been greatly different in many respects. It is not the character of a virtuous philosopher of the ancient school, with all the passions subdued by the

power of reason ;—that would have been still more different. No; the character of our Saviour cannot be classed. It belongs, if we may so explain, to no species of human excellence. It stands alone in its original glory ; for it is universal human goodness and piety, free from all narrow peculiarities. Therefore it is that this character of our Lord is of equal power to command the unqualified reverence and love of all men, of all who are possessed of the moral faculties of human nature, in all ages and all countries. Such *should* be the character of him who is appointed to be the good shepherd that shall bring all men into one spiritual fold. The spirit of God by which he was sanctified and set apart to this office, could alone have thus fitted him to sustain it, by the universal holiness and excellence of his character.

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### LADY HEWLEY'S CHARITY.

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[We gladly transfer to our pages, from the last number of the "*Christian Reformer*," the following account of the course and state of proceedings in Chancery respecting Lady Hewley's Charities. It is both instructive and entertaining ; and we know that it comes from a quarter which may be fully relied on for correct information. The difficulties and absurdities of this famous suit certainly do not lessen at all, as it advances towards a final settlement. By the time it reaches the House of Peers, to which it is to be carried by appeal on the part of the defendants, their lordships will have a truly novel and pleasant case to deal with. Indignant as we are at their conduct, we almost pity the Independents for the situation into which they have already brought themselves, in connection with this affair.—ED.]

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"Thereference to the Master to appoint new Trustees, has had a result not very agreeable to the views of the *Independent* relators, nor, in truth, very creditable to them in the public disclosure it has led to, namely, that these inculcators of the duty of fulfilment of the literal intent, real or supposed, of founders, are in truth at this moment,

as a sect, by far the greatest spoliators in existence,—being avowedly in possession of a great number of old Presbyterian Endowments.

“The Lord Chancellor having given leave to two sets of *Orthodox Presbyterians* to go in before the Master, and agitate the question of trusteeship, the different parties in litigation became—the *Independents*, seeking to have the nomination to themselves,—a body of Presbyterians, attached to the *Established Kirk*, seeking the same thing for themselves,—and again a body of *United Associate Synod* (or Scotch Dissenting) Presbyterians, avowing a similar purpose in *their* interest.

“The discussion was carried on by affidavits at great length, and with no small animosity on all sides. The *Independents*' proposition (curious enough, after Lord Lyndhurst's decree) was that Lady Hewley was an *Independent*; that *Independents* and Presbyterians, were in fact the *same thing*, and in the words and *OATH* of Dr. Pye Smith, “*The term PRESBYTERIAN is in a FAIR, JUST and HONOURABLE SENSE, and in accordance with its PROPER signification, capable of being applied to the generality of English Congregationalists.*”

“This became necessary to their case in two ways; first, to assist their alleged specific title to this particular Endowment, and second, to rebut the general charge strenuously urged by their antagonists the Presbyterians, that they were notorious plunderers of other men's goods, and therefore not fit to be trusted with the charity.

“The war of the two Presbyterian Bodies, as believers themselves, was quite as fierce as their common attack on the *Independents*, and the chief personal objection to both sets of them by the latter (each however admitting its application to the other) was, that they were not English Protestant Dissenters, but, in fact, *Scotch* churches; to which it was replied, as to most of the congregations, that they were not confined to Scotchmen, but that the Scotch connexion had mainly arisen when the heresy of the English Presbyterians in general left such of the Northern congregations as remained orthodox, in want of ministers and of some connexion to bind and unite them together.

One violent point of attack by the seceders upon the *Independents* was on account of the *heresy of their creed*,

as published by them in 1833.—This creed deserves separate examination. It was shewn to be in such general terms, and so couched in scriptural phraseology, as to leave very wide opening for private and heretical interpretation. The adoption of such a creed is, in fact, considering the position of parties, one of those sort of deviations from ancient standards which are quite inconsistent with the Chancery doctrine of inviolable permanence in one road.

"The difficulty was felt and the point was evaded, at all hazards, and at the expense of the character and independence of their body, by the Independents pledging themselves, if and when required, *to subscribe the Assembly's Confession of Faith*. What will the liberal members of their body say to this? and what is to become of some late attempts to evade the formularies of the 17th century? Here they come back to the crudest repulsiveness of their fathers' doctrine. The Assembly's Catechism and Confession must be the standard henceforth—and there must be *no* variation.—The Independents, by their official organs, have now repudiated the defence of their New Confession, and are once more within the strait limits of the old creed.

"Our readers will see how fully these proceedings make out the danger of entering upon ground not marked out by the founder. Lady Hewley not only does not enforce the Assembly's Confession, but she (as far as she recognizes any) takes Bowles's, which may be considered analogous to the Independents' creed of 1833. Yet even in such a case as this, when it was held, even by the Court, that the foundation was certainly *liberal*, though within limits which excluded *Unitarians*, we find that the very first step (not for ascertaining *objects* of bounty, but for merely selecting *Managers*) leads to falling back upon a creed, stricter than any one ventured to impute to the founder, and reduces the informants to the necessity of placing themselves in fetters they had shaken off, and of binding themselves by the harsh dogmas of their puritan ancestors, from which many of their most eminent members have avowedly departed.—(See the controversy with Mr. Youngman, noticed in a note to "The History and Opinions of the English Presbyterians.")

"We hope that all these proceedings, which we understand are in the highest degree amusing, will be published by some one. They are (independent of their value in the materials they have collected, as to the position of the Northern sects) most important as a decisive proof of the justice of the warnings held out, as to the consequences which must follow from Courts of Justice entering upon investigations for which they were obviously unfit, and in which the founders have given them no warranty to interfere.

"One obvious and grievous mischief has already resulted: those for whose common benefit this charity has hitherto been equitably applied, are now engaged against each other, in all the eagerness and bitterness of religious and legal animosity, and there can be little doubt as to the measure which a successful majority will mete to their rivals in the distribution of the charity.

"As to the *Baptists*, they are now openly lamenting *their* position.—Having stood by and quietly regarded, when they did not openly cheer on, the attack on the heretical Presbyterians, they now discover that hitherto they have been most fairly and liberally dealt with, and they avow their conviction that they have not the smallest chance of similar treatment from the new authorities.—They have been remiss in not getting liberty to go in and protect their own interests, and there can be little doubt that their title to any participation will be denied.

"The Master's decision has been, that in composing each of the bodies of seven trustees and sub-trustees, each *Presbyterian* party (i. e. the *Kirk* and the *Seceders*) shall nominate two, and that the *Independents* shall nominate the other *three*; thus leaving them in a minority and in effect virtually destroying (as their Council avowed) their title to the possession of a great proportion of many of the chapels they hold, which are old Presbyterian chapels, and which (if their claim to the *Presbyterian alias* which they have assumed is denied) they obviously hold in open defiance of the principles they have pretended to maintain, as to the religious observance of founders' intents. And it is for this that the *Independents* have branded themselves with the most odious marks of intolerance, have broken up the harmony of the Dissenting Body, and have thrown themselves back into the

chains which the 17th century had forged for the human mind !

“ The whole discussion is to be carried by appeal, we hear, from the Master to the Court. A most desirable preparation for the hearing of the *appeal* now ready in the *Lords* ! Their Lordships will now see what these discussions are likely to lead to, if encouraged.

“ We have forgotten to notice one curious feature of the result as it at present appears, namely, that the great supporters of “ the voluntary principle ” have ejected those English Dissenters to whom they owe, as their leaders, for a century, the establishment of their liberties as Dissenters, and have transferred their portion to an Established State-Endowed Church ! What length will theological spleen carry its votaries next ? ”

Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ ?

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## MORNING.

[From Keble's “ Christian Year.”]

“ Oh ! timely happy, timely wise,  
Hearts that with rising morn arise !  
Eyes that the beam celestial view,  
Which evermore makes all things new !\* ”

“ New every morning is the love  
Our wakening and uprising prove ;  
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
Restored to life, and power, and thought.

“ New mercies each returning day,  
Hover around us while we pray ;  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

“ \* *Revelations xxi. 5.* ”

- “ If on our daily course our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.
- “ Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,  
As more of heaven in each we see :  
Some softening gleam of love and prayer  
Shall dawn on every cross and care.
- “ As for some dear familiar strain  
Untired we ask, and ask again,  
Ever, in its melodious store,  
Finding a spell unheard before ;
- “ Such is the bliss of souls serene,  
When they have sworn, and stedfast mean,  
Counting the cost, in all to’ espy  
Their God, in all themselves deny.
- “ O could we learn that sacrifice,  
What lights would all around us rise !  
How would our hearts with wisdom talk  
Along Life’s dullest, dreariest walk !
- “ We need not bid, for cloister’d cell,  
Our neighbour and our work farewell,  
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high  
For sinful man beneath the sky :
- “ The trivial round, the common task,  
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;  
Room to deny ourselves ; a road  
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

" Seek we no more; content with these  
Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,  
As heaven shall bid them, come and go:—  
The secret this of Rest below.

" Only, O Lord, in thy dear love  
Fit us for perfect Rest above;  
And help us, this and every day,  
To live more nearly as we pray."

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#### ON THE PROPOSED PLAN FOR A UNION OF CHURCHES.

The plan for a liberal *union* of Churches, submitted to the readers of the *Gospel Advocate* in the last number, appears to be advantageous in two points of view. In the first place for the simple sake of union itself. A worthy minister, speaking of our churches not long ago, observed, that they were like a rope of sand; and the remark has certainly but too much truth in it. Now according to the proposed plan, not only would the ministers of our congregations, throughout a circuit as large as convenient, be annually brought together for Christian conference and fellowship, but with them a body of chosen deputies, and doubtless a number of other members of their several churches. Meetings of this kind undoubtedly tend much both to harmony of feeling, and to unity of council and operation. It may perhaps be apprehended that such anniversaries would not long continue to be properly attended, but dwindle away to insignificance. This apprehension however, if such exist, would hardly seem to have sufficient foundation. Such a failure is not experienced at the annual meetings of our existing societies. Now the proposed annual conference would not, I presume, be inferior to them in interest of any sort, while its more serious and business-like character, and especially, perhaps, its function of appropriating the Union Fund, would give it some attractions of which they are destitute. I should therefore anticipate for such annual assemblies a full and frequent attendance. They would be felt to be congrega-

gational affairs, open and interesting to all members of the several churches belonging to the Union, and would therefore concern a much larger number of persons than the subscribers to our present societies. Such meetings ever afford an excellent opportunity for forming and confirming an acquaintance with kindred minds, for an animating and salutary interchange of thoughts and feelings, for discussing subjects of common interest, and thus eliciting and diffusing truth and wisdom, and finally for exercising to the general advantage and edification the superior gifts of the more highly favored brethren.

The plan proposed would also appear to suggest judiciously the measure and manner in which a Christian Church may consult with neighboring churches about its affairs, without subjecting itself to their authority, so as to sacrifice its independence. To hit this mark aright is certainly one of the *desiderata* of the Christian world: and great must be the advantage of that Christian body who may be so happy as to do so. How many intestine mischiefs, and injudicious measures, may be averted by such conference! How many feeble societies encouraged and sustained by the advice and assistance to which it leads! It is a trite maxim that, UNION IS STRENGTH: but familiar as it may be, we have too much neglected it.

Our *Fellowship Funds* are justly deemed excellent institutions; yet at present there is something like a want of combination among them towards the accomplishment of any one object. Now the throwing a portion of their several receipts into a common, or union, fund, to be applied by the collective body, seems well calculated to meet this deficiency, and to enable them to act with greater effect in any important case that may arise to require their aid. At present these Fellowship Funds, however commendable, seem to be rather languishing. It is to be hoped that a reunion like that proposed would impart to them fresh energy.

The providing a fund for assisting in the education of young ministers would also seem to be a very important object. In this part of England, especially, so remote as we are from the Academies, it is more particularly so. But even were the Academies nearer to us than they are,

it may much be doubted whether they afford the best preparation for the ministry. It may often be more advisable, when a young man of serious turn avows a disposition to this calling, to place him for a while under the private instruction and guidance of some suitable elder minister, rather than in any public institution whatever. Certainly, many excellent ministers have been brought forward in this way, and have not appeared at all to disadvantage from not having been prepared at the Academies. Now a local fund for giving assistance in such cases seems to be a very desirable thing, and I cannot but regard it as one of the most legitimate and important objects which such a union as that proposed could keep in view. Great indeed may be the service done by a pious and learned minister, who in this private way brings forward a succession of young men to the sacred office, whom he has inspired not with a taste for criticism and polemics, but with his own seriousness, wisdom and devotion: who from his example ever before their eyes, have learned to regard the work of the ministry with a view to its great practical ends, the effectual awakening of the world from sin to righteousness. And great may be the utility of providing a fund whereby this object may be furthered.

Having said thus much respecting the advantages of a more intimate union of Churches, considered simply as such, I may be permitted to add a few words on those which I conceive to belong to the particular footing, or foundation, on which it is proposed this union should rest. I am convinced that there is a vital importance in the truly catholic character of its proposed title and principle. Surely, if eighteen centuries have taught the Christian world any thing, it is that sectarian dogmas are not worth contending for. Christianity is religion *as taught in the New Testament*: it is nothing more, and it is nothing less. *There* it is: *that* is its authentic record, its only legitimate exposition. To add to this or to take from it, to select parts for preference, to paraphrase them for amplification, to define them for precision: what are all such proceedings, if any weight or authority beyond those of private opinion be attempted to be attached to them, but violations of the prerogatives of Scripture, and the right of private judgment? The principle following hence is most important,

namely, that no Christian Church ought, in its collective capacity, to recognize any sectarian dogma or opinion whatever. It ought not by any title which it assumes, or by any rules or principles which it may adopt, to pledge itself to the distinguishing tenets of any sect. The reason is both simple and obvious. It lies in the certainty that whatever is essential to Christianity is too clearly written to be matter of dispute ; that what is obscure is comparatively unimportant ; and that no church can have a right to erect any disputed matter into a term of Christian communion. The church that does so is an author of *schism*, no matter whether it ranks as a dissenting sect or a national establishment.

Things being so, it seems to be of great importance, that Christian societies whose views are really liberal, should unite under such names and with the avowal of such principles, as will declare that they repudiate utterly the whole affair of sectarian dogmatism, root and branch, to return to it if possible no more. Nothing, to be sure, is new, under the sun : but this would be as nearly so as most things which it is our good fortune to behold.

Let us not think, however, that it is even in our power to be the first to gather these laurels. We know that in America there is a *Christian* body, founded precisely on these principles, which in twenty five years has advanced from nothing to a thousand churches and three hundred thousand worshippers. These people we are assured are, *de facto*, Unitarians ; they declare as much themselves. But then that is incidental : their Unitarianism is not the principle of their union, but results entirely from the adoption of the catholic, and strictly Scriptural, principle now contended for. The same thing may be much affected by the aspect under which it is viewed. Simple scriptural Christianity and Unitarianism are, in our belief, identically the same ; and whoever seeks the former faithfully, will arrive at the latter. But this same scriptural truth, presented under the name and form of Unitarianism, appears as a controverted sectarian peculiarity. Although, therefore, the ground to be maintained be essentially the same, it may still be of much consequence where we take our position. Contending for the dogma, we are weak

and narrow-minded : but struggling for scripture and catholicism, we are strong, free and enlightened.

“*Christian Union*,” rather than *Union* simply, might probably be an amendment in the proposed title: not only as *Unions* of other kinds are now familiar, but for the sake of asserting that name which bigotry and ignorance are so ready to deny us.

B.

## THE SCRIPTURE INTERPRETER.—No. XV.

1 Corinthians xv, vs. 45—47.

“*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven.*”

There is no small difficulty in ascertaining the exact sense of the apostle in these words. In the first place, he appears to mingle and confound, in a singular manner, a quotation from the Old Testament, and a sentiment of his own. “As it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” The reference is plainly to *Genesis*, ch. 2. v. 7. But the former of those two assertions alone is to be found in that place: “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, *and man became a living soul.*” The second assertion, that “the last Adam was made a quickening spirit,” is the apostle’s own addition, though he seems to give it as a part of the quotation. This difficulty is certainly not created by the English version; but exists quite as strongly in the original Greek text. Perhaps it is impossible, and not necessary for any serious purpose, entirely to clear up this difficulty:—it may be nothing more than an obscurity of language.

It is of more consequence to determine what, or whom, the writer means by “the last Adam.” We agree with those, the great majority of good commentators, who understand it of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some, indeed, have understood the passage otherwise; but, as appears

to us, without sufficient reason. The words, taken by themselves, may possibly admit of a different sense ; but no other is so suitable to the train of argument in which the apostle is here engaged. In this context he is endeavouring, as far as human language will suffice, to illustrate the mystery of the resurrection. He says, that as the glory of the sun differs from the glory of the moon, and as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead. He afterwards says, “ it is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption.” Then come the words we are seeking to interpret :—“ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a *living soul*.” By a “ *living soul*, ” judging from the sense of the original expressions in Genesis, is meant simply a *living being or creature*. It is well observed by the learned Bishop Pearce, that there is no one word in the English language which exactly corresponds to the word of the original Scriptures. It does not signify an immaterial, immortal principle, distinct from the body, which is perhaps the usual understanding of the English word “ *soul*. ” If there be any word in Scripture which has this meaning it is that which occurs in the latter clause of this 45th verse, and is translated “ *spirit*. ” The expression here rendered “ *living soul*, ” is frequently applied to beasts, as in the first chapter of Genesis, where it is properly translated “ *living creatures*. ” It signifies, therefore, merely a being that has life, in distinction from inanimate objects. The first man Adam, then, was made simply a living, rational being. The last Adam, says the apostle, has been made “ *a quickening spirit* ; ”—that is a life-giving spirit, a spiritual being, not only possessing true life in himself, but empowered, authorized, and qualified, to impart the same true spiritual life to others. Who can this be, but our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead, and exalted to a spiritual, immortal existence in heaven ; and to whom God, the Father of spirits, has committed power and authority, to raise all mankind from the dead, that he may give eternal life to as many as believe in him and obey his righteous laws. The following verses support this interpretation. “ *Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural*. ” The word here rendered “ *natural*, ” is an adjective formed from the

noun which in the 45th verse is translated "soul";—it therefore means, that which has life, that which is animated. The first Adam, who was a living, but a perishable, mortal man, preceded our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great revealer and pattern of a true spiritual life, and a glorious immortality, to our race. In like manner, though we all are first subject to the frailties, sufferings, and painful dissolution of this mortal state, yet we may all hope, through Christ, to be made partakers of that spiritual and endless life, to which he has taught us in his gospel to aspire. It is obvious how contrary this is to the popular notion, that the first man was created with a nature pure and immortal, which afterwards, through his transgression, became polluted with sin and subject to death in all his posterity. The apostle does not seem to have known of any such awful retrogression, or falling off, in the condition of mankind. "As God was pleased," says Rosenmuller, "to assign to man a two-fold nature, one mortal, the other immortal, it was not expedient to assign this superior nature to him first, and make him, as it were, fall into a state of deterioration and degradation; nay, indeed, it were against the nature of things for a mortal nature to succeed an immortal one."

"The first man," continues the apostle, "is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." So the words stand in our common version; and if there were no reason to doubt the correctness of this reading, the sense, we conceive would be perfectly consistent with the simple humanity of our Saviour's person. He is "the Lord" of all believers, and is so called in Scripture with reference entirely to his divine office, as the spiritual Teacher and Ruler of mankind. We have before shown, ("Scripture Interpreter, No. viii.") that Christ is said *to be from heaven*, and *to come down from heaven*, in the same figurative or spiritual sense;—namely, in reference entirely to his divine mission and authority. He is therefore "the Lord from heaven," equally whether or not we believe in the proper deity of his nature. But it must be observed, that there are strong grounds to doubt the genuineness of the words "*the Lord*" in this place. Many ancient manuscripts and versions of high repute are without these words. They are marked by Griesbach as

"probably to be omitted," though, in his very cautious method of proceeding, he does not venture to cast them out of the text. In what is called the Bishop's Bible, an English version made previous to that now in use, these words are not found. The translation there stands thus : — "The first man was of the earth, created out of dust ; the second man is of heaven, being heavenly." There is more clearness and simplicity in this reading, and it is probably correct. But, as we have already observed, it can make no material difference in the sense of the passage. On the supposition of either reading, "the second man" must surely be understood to signify our Saviour Jesus Christ. The general import of the passage is thus rendered plain. All men now bear the image of Adam ; they are all, like him, frail, sinful, suffering, and mortal creatures. We inherit and derive from him, as the natural head of our race, that imperfect and earthly nature, which exposes us to so many grievous departures from the law of holiness, enjoined upon us by our Almighty Governor. With this nature, and with its consequence, sin, is connected by divine appointment the condemnation of death. But it is clearly promised in scripture, that all the sincere and obedient followers of Jesus Christ shall bear *his* image. By the influence of their faith, they are even now created anew after the image of him who created them. It is also declared, that when "he cometh to raise the dead, he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Therefore, as Adam commenced the reign of sin and death, by committing the first human transgression, so has Christ, by his perfect obedience to the law of God, and by his resurrection to immortality commenced the reign of righteousness and eternal life. He has received power and authority to draw all men unto him. The purpose for which Christ has been exalted, is to save men from the sinfulness and mortality which they inherit from Adam. If there be faithfulness in the ways and promises of God, he shall reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. It is a gracious and cheering assurance that "as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

## LINES ON THE CALM SEA.

It looks just like a fairy land,  
 So beautiful, so fair,  
 As if the great Almighty hand  
     Had newly placed it there—  
 As starting from a second birth,  
 To grace and glad the grateful earth.

'Tis calm as in an infant's dream  
     Upon its mother's breast;  
 So purely still—Ah! who could dream  
     That ought could break its rest?  
 And yet 'twill wake to storms and strife  
 Alas! how like the course of life.

Yet let its pleading silence tell  
     Of comfort to each breast;  
 Though storms may rise and tempests swell,  
     There comes a day of rest,  
 When life's dark storms shall pass away,  
 And leave a calm and cloudless day.

L. F.

## NECESSITY OF ACTIVE ENDEAVOURS TO CULTIVATE VIRTUE.

There is no possibility of becoming morally wise and good without strenuous active endeavours. This is a circumstance worthy of our best consideration. It is a secret in the art of holy living, which mankind in general do not appear to be well acquainted with. They seem to imagine that the business of the Christian life is altogether of a passive, not at all of an active, character. They conceive that if they content themselves by resolving

to withstand evil temptation when it comes, by resisting the enemy when some attack upon their virtue is actually made, this will be sufficient; and that they can be always secure, that they can be all which religion obliges them to be, merely by this stern resolve not to be led away by temptation, without making a single continued effort to cultivate active principles, feelings, and habits of goodness. Now, no such thing is possible; not, at least, to the generality of men, whatever it may be to a few persons, who either from having good principles early and deeply instilled into their minds, or from certain happy peculiarities of disposition, do not require the same discipline as others. The human heart may, in one respect, be compared to water; if it be suffered to remain long, as it were stagnant, unmoved by any salutary influences, it will be sure to become corrupted. Human virtue requires strengthening exercise, to preserve it even in a heathful state. There is no sure way of not becoming evil, but by taking pains to become good. Our hopes and desires, and all the principal affections of our nature, must be fixed upon something; if they be not directed towards moral and spiritual pleasures, they will inevitably seize upon earthly pleasures, and all their energy will be spent in the pursuit of that frail good, all which perishes in the handling. This shews the folly, then, of supposing that we can effectually overcome evil by any means, except "*with good.*"

In order to make sure of this conquest, we must be careful to cultivate good *principles*. Steadiness and propriety of conduct are the fruits of principle; and they never resulted from passion, or from that heedless spirit which suffers the character to be formed entirely by circumstances. Without some settled views and principles of duty, without some acquaintance with those sacred obligations on which our duties rest, we can never hope to be found equal to the trials of life. Ignorance can never serve as a guide to virtue; doubt and hesitation can never produce a character of firm and vigorous obedience; and as for wrong views, false principles, it were as vain to hope for a life of virtue from their influence, as to expect that we shall gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. No; we must earnestly seek for the knowledge

of what is correct in faith, and sound in principle, and this knowledge must be our guide to the practice of virtue; these views of the understanding must give us light to behold where the path of duty and of holiness is truly to be found. In short, with the possession of good principles, established in the mind upon the solid foundations of truth and reason, the Christian, when he is tempted of evil, finds that there is a way prepared for him to escape from its power. This must be what the apostle meant by putting on the breast-plate of faith. The man of established moral and religious principles will seldom indeed fall in the encounter with sin. He will pursue his journey through life in a steady, consistent course of virtue. The weapons of his warfare are spiritual, and they secure him an easy victory.

But further, as a means of overcoming evil, it will be necessary that we cultivate not only good principles, but good *affections*. Not only is it expedient that our views of duty, and of all moral and sacred subjects, should be correctly formed, but also that our prevailing desires and affections, regulated by these views, should be fervently engaged upon heavenly things. Feeling, sentiment, is the immediate spring of action, in most human characters; and perhaps, if the feelings be wisely cultivated, it may be best that it should be so; for it certainly imparts an energy and promptness to the conduct of life, which is seldom to be expected from the mere calculations of reason and prudence, however justly they may have been formed. We must acquire the sentiments of love and reverence towards God, and give them a principal place,—nay the very highest place,—amongst the settled and habitual emotions of our hearts. We must not look upon religion as a mere speculation, as though we were to be saved by knowledge alone. We act, for the most part, in order to gratify some desire, under the influence of some affection or inclination, which moves us strongly to the pursuit of its object. And if these desires and inclinations be entirely wanting, whatever knowledge there may be of the existence of the objects, there will be no corresponding practice. It is so with the truly religious man, in regard to the pleasures of sense and the world; and why should it not be so with many men, in regard to the pleasures and rewards of religion?

The most pious man living may know, and probably does know, of all the temporal advantages, and immediate gratifications, to be found in a sinful course. He knows that they exist, he believes them to be, according to their nature, and for the moment, real pleasures, as they appear to the wicked. But the great difference of their conditions is, that the religious man does not desire these pleasures; his affections are not at all fixed upon them; and therefore they have no power to draw him after them in the conduct of life. Let him beware, then, that the same thing does not take place in respect to his religious character. Let him be careful that his acquaintance with the sacred delights, and the everlasting advantages of piety and virtue, be not confined to mere knowledge and belief; let him be sure that God, and righteousness, and spiritual pleasures, take a firm hold of his desires and affections also; otherwise there will be little prospect that, in the actual moral warfare of life, he will always be able to overcome evil with good.

It is necessary likewise, that we should cultivate good *habits* and *practices*. Not even right principles and right feelings will be sufficient to render us certainly victorious over sin, unless we diligently cultivate habits of virtuous conduct. Righteous living is more of the nature of an art than of a science; perfection can be acquired only by practice, frequent, steady, and continual practice. We may almost be said to have a constitutional appetite for employment. We must always be doing something, as well as desiring something. It is in vain, therefore, to think of securing ourselves against the temptations of one kind of employment for our active powers, without providing ourselves with some other and better engagements. We cannot be effectually guarded against evil pursuits in any other way, than by directing our energies to some good pursuits, which shall at least be as full of interest, and hope, and pleasing activity, as the ways of sin; and they may easily be rendered far more so. There is happily a satisfaction arising from every course of well-doing, and even from every single act of virtue, which renders the repetition of itself more easy and more delightful. So that by perseverance the practice of righteousness becomes at length

familiar and natural ; and then we have another strong ally to assist us in our encounters with evil ; we have not only the conviction that we are acting agreeably to our principles, to our deliberate views of what is right ; we have not only the gratification of our virtuous desires and affections ; but we have also the power of habit in our favour ; and this, it is well known, is one of the mightiest helps which a man can have in any pursuit.

CHRISTIANUS.

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"*Lectures on Popular Education; delivered to the Edinburgh Philosophical Association, in April and November 1833; (and Published by request of the Directors of the Association.) By GEORGE COMBE. Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged.* Edinburgh : MacLachlan and Stewart, and John Anderson, Jun. Longman and Co., and Simpkin, Marshall and Co., London ; John Macleod, Glasgow ; W. Grapell, Liverpool. 1837."

The subject of general education has of late years engaged the attention of many superior minds. A feeling is becoming widely prevalent amongst thinking people that this, the very *means* of our personal and social improvement, stands greatly in need of reformation. The old methods and course of instruction, pursued in most of our schools, have been examined boldly, and condemned in many instances with no little severity ; perhaps with more severity, or with a more indiscriminate censure, than they properly deserve ; but this will always happen, when erroneous systems of any kind remain after their faults have been discovered, and continue to be pertinaciously defended. Violent opposition creates and strengthens prejudices on both sides. The author of these Lectures, as will be admitted by all who are acquainted with his former writings, was as likely as any one to treat the subject with calmness and judgment. He is, indeed, a determined and zealous phrenologist. But whether it be in consequence or in spite of his phrenology, (on which point different conclusions may be formed,) we profess that we hold him to be a man of truly enlightened views on many questions relating to human advancement and happiness.

These Lectures have been twice delivered before the "Edinburgh Philosophical Association," an institution which appears to have had the best and most extensive effects on the population of that city. It must not be supposed, as it might be from the title of this publication, that the Lectures relate entirely or principally to the education of the labouring classes, or *the people*, as they are commonly designated. This subject is frequently touched upon by Mr. Combe, and always in the best spirit; but education in general, the education of all classes and of both sexes, is the proper theme of the Lectures. We shall not be sparing in our extracts, for we think our readers will find them worthy of attention. The author thus declares his views of human nature, on which his principles of education are founded :

" Let us now contemplate Man himself, and his adaptation to the external creation. The world, we have seen, was inhabited by living beings, and death and reproduction prevailed, before Man appeared. The order of creation seems not to have been changed at his introduction—he appears to have been adapted to it. He received from his Creator an organized structure, and animal instincts. He took his station among, yet at the head of, the beings that existed at his creation. Man is, to a certain extent on a level with the lower animals in his structure, powers, feelings, and desires, and is adapted to a world in which death reigns, and generation succeeds generation. This fact, although so trite and obvious as to appear scarcely worthy of being noticed, is of importance in treating of education; because the human being, in so far as he resembles the inferior creatures, is capable of enjoying a life like theirs; he has pleasure in eating, drinking, sleeping, and exercising his limbs; and one of the greatest obstacles to his improvement is, that many of the race are contented with these enjoyments, and consider it painful to be compelled to seek higher sources of gratification. But to man's animal nature, have been added by a bountiful Creator, moral sentiments and a vastly superior endowment of the reflecting faculties, which not only place him above all other creatures on earth, but constitute him a different being from any of them, a rational and accountable creature. These faculties are his highest and his best gifts, and the sources of his purest and intensest pleasures. They lead him directly to those important objects of his existence,—obedience to God, and love to his fellow-men. But this peculiarity attends them, that while his animal faculties, which are necessary for his preservation, act powerfully of themselves, his moral and rational faculties require to be cultivated, exercised, and instructed, before they will yield their full harvest of enjoyment. In regard to them, education becomes of paramount importance."

And again, we have the following wise observations on the same topic :—

“ Man, ignorant and uncivilized, is a ferocious, sensual, and superstitious savage. The external world affords some enjoyments to his animal feelings, but it confounds his moral and intellectual faculties. Nature exhibits to his mind a mighty chaos of events, and a dread display of power. The chain of causation appears too intricate to be unravelled, and the power too stupendous to be controlled. Order and beauty, indeed, occasionally gleam forth to his eye, from detached portions of creation, and seem to promise happiness and joy; but more frequently, clouds and darkness brood over the scene, and disappoint his fondest expectations. Evil seems so mixed up with good, that he regards it either as its direct product or its inseparable accompaniment. Nature is never contemplated with a clear perception of its adaptation to the purpose of promoting the true enjoyment of man, or with a well founded confidence in the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. Man, when civilized and illuminated by knowledge, on the other hand, discovers in the objects and occurrences around him a scheme beautifully arranged for the gratification of his whole powers, animal, moral, and intellectual; he recognises in himself the intelligent and accountable subject of an all-bountiful Creator, and in joy and gladness desires to study the Creator’s works, to ascertain his laws, and to yield to them a steady and a willing obedience. Without undervaluing the pleasures of his animal nature, he tastes the higher, more refined, and more enduring delights of his moral and intellectual capacities, and he then calls aloud for education as indispensable to the full enjoyment of his rational powers.

“ If this representation of the condition of the human being on earth be correct, we perceive clearly the unspeakable advantage of applying our minds to gain knowledge, and of regulating our conduct according to rules drawn from acquired information. Our constitution and our position equally imply, that the grand object of our existence is, not to remain contented with the pleasures of mere animal life, but to take the dignified and far more delightful station of moral, religious, and rational occupants of this lower world.

“ Education, then, means the process of acquiring that knowledge of our Creator, of ourselves, and of external nature, and the formation of those habits of enterprize and activity, which are indispensable to the evolution of our highest qualities, and to the performance of our parts, with intelligence and success, in such a scene as I have described.

Few questions of this kind have been more warmly agitated, than that which relates to the comparative utility of teaching *languages* to so great an extent as is now common. In the following passage, Mr. Combe has certainly put the subject in a clear and strong light :—

“ Words are mere arbitrary signs for expressing feelings and ideas in the mind; and the best condition of an individual is to possess ample

ideas, and an equally extensive stock of words. It is better, however, to have ten ideas, and only ten words to express them, although all the words should belong to one language, than to have only *one* idea, and *ten* words in as many *different* languages for communicating it. For example, a monk, who has only seen a horse passing by the window of his cell, may know that this animal is named in Greek, *ἵππος*, (*hippos*) ; in Latin, *equus* ; in English, *a horse* ; in French, *cheval* ; in Italian, *cavallo* ; in German, *pferd* ; and, by some persons, he may be supposed to be, in consequence, highly learned. He is indeed considerably learned, but unfortunately not on the subject of the horse itself, but only on the names by which it is designated in different countries. His stock of **REAL** knowledge would be only that which he had picked up by looking at the creature through the window, and would not be in the slightest degree increased by the acquirement of these *six* words to express the *name* of the animal. His original **NOTION** of a horse, whatever it was, would continue unextended by all these additions to his knowledge of its names. The person of a man is neither stronger, taller, nor more graceful, because he possesses six suits of clothes, than it would be if he had only one ; and so it is with the mind. A youth, trained in the stable yard, whose attention had been directed to the various qualities necessary to constitute a good hackney, hunter, or race-horse, and who knew its name only in his mother-tongue, would be far superior, as a practical judge of horses, to the monk. He would excel him in selecting, employing, managing, and rearing horses. He would possess ideas about the animal itself—would know what points were good and what points bad about it ; how it would thrive on particular kinds of food ; and in what manner it ought habitually to be treated, so as to obtain the most complete developement of its natural powers. This is *practical knowledge* : acquaintance with words is *learning*. Hitherto education has been conducted too much on the principle of looking at the world only out of the window of the school and the college, and teaching the names of the beings and things therein contained, in a variety of languages, to the neglect of the study of the beings and things themselves ; whereas man, as a creature destined for action, fitted to control nature to some extent, and, beyond this, left to accommodate his conduct to its course, requires positive knowledge of creation, its elements and laws, and has little use for words which go beyond the stock of his ideas."

Mr. Combe, we think, is unquestionably right in maintaining that the working classes of society can never be well educated, or can never attain to much permanent cultivation of mind, until their extensive and protracted labour is abridged, that they may have leisure for mental improvement. He looks for this as one of the happy results of the invention and employment of machinery. We hope he is right in this expectation ; but he seems not sufficiently to have reflected, that before machinery can have this effect on the intellectual condition of the labour-

ing classes, it must first have the effect of supplying them, in return for a moderate portion of labour, with an abundance of the necessaries and comforts of life. The animal wants will take precedence in their claims to gratification. An improvement in the physical condition of the masses, must go before any great improvement in their moral and social condition ;—yet there can be no doubt, that the lowness of their moral condition affords at present one of the most formidable obstacles to the improvement of their physical and social condition. Here lies the chief practical difficulty. The following remarks, however, are in themselves good :—

“ One requisite to enable man to follow pursuits referrible to his higher endowments, is provision for the wants of his animal nature, viz. food, raiment, and comfortable lodging. It is clear that muscular power, intellect, and mechanical skill, have been conferred on him, with the design that he should build houses, plough fields, and fabricate commodities. But assuredly we have no warrant from reason or revelation for believing that any portion of the people are bound to dedicate their whole lives and energies, aided by all mechanical discoveries, to these ends, as their proper business, to the neglect of the study of the works and will of the Creator ? Has man been permitted to discover the steam-engine, and apply it in propelling ships on the ocean and carriages on rail-ways, in spinning, weaving, and forging iron,—and has he been gifted with intellect to discover the astonishing powers of physical agents, such as are revealed by chemistry and mechanics,—only that he may be enabled to build more houses, weave more cloth, and forge more iron, without any direct regard to his moral and intellectual improvement ? If, a century ago, an individual had wished to travel from Manchester to Liverpool, a distance of thirty miles, he, unaided by animal or mechanical power, would have needed to devote ten or twelve hours and considerable muscular energy, to the task. When roads and carriages were constructed, and horses trained, he might, by their assistance, have accomplished the same journey in four hours, with little fatigue ; and now, when railways and steam-engines have been successfully completed, he may travel that distance, without any bodily fatigue whatever, in an hour and a half. If it be asked, For what purpose has Providence bestowed the nine hours, which are thus set free as spare time to the individual ? I respectfully answer, For the purpose of cultivating his rational nature.

“ In proportion as mechanical inventions shall be generally diffused over the world, they will increase the powers of production to such an extent, as to supply, by moderate labour, every want of man ; and then the great body of the people will find themselves in possession of reasonable leisure, in spite of every exertion to avoid it. Great misery will probably be suffered in persevering in the present course of

action, before their eyes shall be opened to this result. The first effect of these stupendous mechanical inventions threatens to be to accumulate great wealth in the hands of a few, without proportionally abridging the toil, or adding greatly to the comforts, of the many. This process of elevating a part of the community to affluence and power, and degrading the rest, threatens to proceed till the disparity of condition shall have become intolerable to both, the labourer being utterly oppressed, and the higher classes harassed by insecurity. Then probably, the idea may occur, that the real benefit of physical discovery is to give leisure to the mass of the people, and that leisure for mental improvement is an indispensable condition of true civilization, knowledge being another. Wealth puts time at the command of its possessors, and is thus highly conducive to human improvement. The science of human nature will enable men at length to profit by exemption from excessive toil; and it may be hoped that, in course of time, the notion of man being really a rational creature, may meet with general countenance, and that sincere attempts may be made to render all ranks prosperous and happy, by institutions founded on the basis of the superior faculties."

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"*The Pictorial History of England: being a History of the People, as well as a History of the Kingdom. Illustrated with many Hundred wood-cuts.* Vol. I. London: Charles Knight & Co. 1837."

Some persons have expressed an alarm, less the attainment of knowledge should be rendered in the present times too easy and delightful. They fear that the great facility and pleasure of the acquisition may interfere with the depth and strength of the impressions left on the mind, and that the result will be a superficial, evanescent kind of knowledge. We are not prepared to say that there may not be some branches of knowledge to which these fears are justly applicable; but perhaps it will be allowed that *history* is not one of them. It is proverbially a dull study, with certain exceptions, to young minds; and indeed to the most mature minds also, in the manner in which it has been too often written. The "Pictorial History of England" appears to us a very excellent and pleasant work, adapted to be exceedingly useful in families. It is on the plan of the "Pictorial Bible," with which it is likely that most of our readers are acquainted. The wood-cuts by which it is illustrated are numerous and beautiful,

they represent, in this first part, British antiquities of the most interesting kind,—galleys, war chariots, spears, shields, camps, Stonehenge, wall of Severus, &c. &c. But even as a history, this work appears to be arranged and composed on the best principles. The following remarks on the supposed identity of the Welsh with the ancient Britons, shew an acquaintance with the latest researches on the subject.

"The Welsh, as every one is aware, have been in the habit of regarding themselves as the genuine descendants and representatives of the ancient Britons, who possessed the whole of the southern portion of the island before the arrival of the Saxons, and were indeed the same people that inhabited the country when it was first invaded by the Romans, and had probably occupied it for many preceding centuries. This descent being assumed, the Welsh language has generally been held to be a Celtic dialect, and essentially the same that was spoken by the original Britons, only mixed with some words of Latin derivation, which it is supposed to have received from the intercourse of those who used it with the Roman colonists.

"It would probably be difficult to produce any direct evidence for these notions; but they have been, until very recently, the almost universally received faith among the students of British antiquities.

"Yet it is certain in the first place, that no trace is to be found in the notices of Britain by the Greek or Roman writers, of any people or tribe settled in the district now called Wales, from which the Welsh can with any probability be supposed to have sprung. They exhibit no marks which would lead us to suspect their progenitors to have been the Silures, whose swarthy countenances and curled hair gave them to Tacitus the appearance of a Spanish race. The Welsh have always called themselves Cymry; there is no resemblance between this name and either that of the Silures, or that of the Demetæ, or that of the Ordovices, the only British tribes whom we read of, either in Ptolemy, or in any of the historians of the Roman wars, as occupying Wales in the time of the Romans. Indeed no name resembling the Cymry occurs anywhere in the ancient geography of the island, so far as it is to be collected from these authorities. It is not pretended that this appellation has been adopted by the Welsh since the time of the Romans; if therefore the people bearing it were then in the island, and more especially if they formed, as the common account would seem to imply, the most ancient and illustrious of all the tribes by which the country was occupied, how did it happen that they wholly escaped notice? How are we to account for the fact of tribes with other appellations altogether being set down by contemporary geographers and historians in the very district which the Cymry claim as their proper and ancient residence?

"But further, it clearly appears, and has been acknowledged by some of the ablest and most learned of the Welsh antiquaries themselves, that the district now called Wales must have been inhabited in

ancient times by another race than the present Welsh. The oldest names of natural objects and localities throughout Wales are not Welsh. This was long ago stated by Humphrey Lhuyd, and has been since abundantly established.

"Lhuyd's statement is that the old names throughout Wales are Irish ; and until very lately it was universally assumed that the Welsh and the Irish were only two dialects of the same Celtic speech. It was unquestionable that the Irish and Scottish Gaelic was, as its name imports, the language of the ancient Gael or Celts ; and as no doubt was entertained that the Welsh, as descendants of the old Britons, were a Celtic race, it was taken for granted that their language also was only another sister dialect of the Celtic. But it would seem that this too was another notion adopted without any evidence, and indeed in the face of evidence, if it had been looked into, quite sufficient to disprove it. It would not, we apprehend, be possible to quote, in support of the asserted identity of the Welsh and Irish, or Gaelic, the authority of any writer who had really made himself master of the two languages, or even examined them attentively with the view of ascertaining in how far they resembled or differed from each other, and whether they were properly to be regarded as belonging to the same or to different stocks. On the other hand, we have in denial of their relationship, the distinctly pronounced judgment both of Welshmen, of Irishmen, and of inquirers having no partialities of origin to influence their conclusions, all speaking upon a question which they have deliberately considered, and which some of them, at least, possessed all the necessary qualifications for deciding. The same opinion that had been first expressed upon the subject by the learned and acute Bishop Percy, an Englishman, has since been maintained as not admitting of any doubt both by the Welsh antiquary Roberts, and the Irish O'Connor, and has also been adopted by the German Adelung, and finally, to all appearance, unanswerably established by Sir William Betham, who has devoted many years to the study of both languages. All these authorities declare in substance that the Cymraeg tongue spoken in Wales, and the Gaelic spoken in Ireland and Scotland, exhibit little resemblance even in vocabulary, and, to use the words of Dr. O'Connor, "are as different in their syntactic construction as any two tongues can be." It may be added, that this seems also to have been the opinion of the late learned General Vallancey."

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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The state of public affairs still continues of the same anxious and critical nature, as when we referred to the subject in our last number. The expectations of most persons are rather increased, that there must shortly be a change of ministry, or a dissolution of Parliament, or both. Parties seem, in the legislature as well in the country at large, to be balancing each other more nearly, and advancing to a closer conflict than has been usual of late; so as to render it probable, that one or the other must give way, for a time at least, and allow the opposite party to enjoy a more determined ascendancy. It is quite evident, we think, that the Conservatives intend to perform again the same part as they played in the last Session, respecting Irish affairs, and especially on the now paramount question of municipal reform. The Bill relating to this question has not yet gone through Committee in the House of Commons; but in whatever state it may ultimately leave that House, we are sure that it will be treated most unceremoniously, if not insultingly, by the House of Peers. What is to follow? The present ministers must in that case surely resign. They cannot go on, session after session, holding office and yet seeing their most important measures of domestic policy thwarted in this manner. What then is to follow? It is a question which we feel quite unable to answer, even to the satisfaction of our own minds. The future must be left to develop itself. We have no fears, on the whole, for the final success of the cause of justice and reformation.

Almost the only new measure of great public interest, brought forward during the last month, is the Government proposition on the subject of *Church Rates*. This had appeared to us, for some time, one of the most difficult and stubborn questions of the present day. Not that we had much doubt in regard to what was just and wise in principle concerning Church Rates; but the difficulty seemed to be in finding an expedient method of practically removing the evil. It is plain that the two parties, High Churchmen and rigid Dissenters, hold extreme opinions and entertain extreme feelings on this question. What would satisfy the one party, it appeared, would be certain

to make the other party furious. Dissenters would not submit to pay any portion of this money *indirectly*, by means of a sum taken from the Consolidated Fund, (as proposed by Lord Althorp,) or in any other way abstracted from the general property of the nation. They said the Church had property enough of her own, if it were rightly applied, to support her own edifices, and to provide for the cost of her own worship; and that she ought to be compelled to make such a righteous use of her wealth. On the other side, Churchmen as vehemently protested that they had no more ecclesiastical property, nor so much, as was necessary for the purposes to which it was already applied; and they began to raise the absurd cry of spoliation against every proposal of taking away one farthing of the income of the Church from any specific use to which it is now appropriated, in order to maintain the sacred edifices of the land. What was to be done in this dilemma? To adopt any middle course, to pursue any middle measure, seemed to be impossible. The government, however, declare that they have found such a middle course. They propose to *create* a fund, to add to the pecuniary resources of the country to the extent which will be necessary, or even further, by an improved system of managing certain Church lands and other property. It is well known that such property, under the present system of frequent and heavy fines, arbitrarily imposed by the ecclesiastical owners for the time being, who have only a life interest, does not produce any thing like its true value. The lessees will not employ and improve such property, as they would do if they held it by some more secure and agreeable kind of tenure;—and therefore, of course, will not give so much for their tenancy. This evil is inseparable from the system of letting Church lands and houses, as it now exists. The Government Bill, if passed into a law, will entirely remove this evil, and by placing the administration of this property in the hands of a permanent Commission, and allowing tenants to hold it by long and secure leases, will actually cause it to produce some hundreds of thousands of pounds more every year. Out of this additional fund, without at all diminishing the income of any Bishops, Deans and Chapters, or other ecclesiastical persons, there is to be the sum of

£250,000 per annum applied as a substitute for Church Rates. This would seem, then, a happy expedient. Here is the way to obtain the desired object, without either coming upon the general taxation of the country, and so making Dissenters pay indirectly, or on the other hand depriving the clergy of any portion of the incomes which they now have, *or ever could have* by their own management of their own property. Should we not have expected this proposal to be met with approbation by all who desire peace and justice? But, alas! there is no spirit of concession or of moderation in the breasts of High Churchmen. The measure is violently opposed from that quarter, on grounds which have more of pride and nonsense in them, than of Christian liberality. The Bishops, as usual, have led the way in this fierce resistance to the endeavours of the king's ministers to remedy a public grievance and promote the peace of the country. After three nights of weary debate, the House was divided, and the Government, we regret to say, obtained only a majority of 23 in favour of their proposal. It is smaller, undoubtedly, than might have been wished and expected;—too small, we fear, to have any weight with the upper House of Parliament. It is understood that the Ministers intend to urge the measure on; but in all probability its fate is determined, and another strong impulse is added to the daily increasing tide of popular discontent flowing against the Conservative Peers.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*The contribution of C. W. F. is come to hand, and we feel obliged. We have not received the promised continuation by an "Admirer of Psalmody."*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL. IV.

## USE AND AUTHORITY OF REASON IN RELIGION.

We are convinced that the popular mode of treating reason, in connexion with its exercise on subjects of religious faith, is not more unnecessary than it is injurious, so far as it bears upon the true interests and benefits of religion itself. Religion is hereby brought into disrepute, and treated with cold indifference by minds that might otherwise profit greatly from its heavenly influence. Its very foundations are hereby undermined. Its authority in the world is weakened. The corruptions which defile its beauty, conceal its glory, and obstruct its holy and beneficent operations, are preserved from detection. It is the more easily converted into superstition and priesthood, and so made to be the ally of ignorance, false morality and false piety, instead of being the powerful ally of all which is wise, good, and happy, in the present condition of mankind, and a more abundant source, to greater numbers, of joy and peace everlasting. But we are persuaded, that this prejudice against the free use of reason in religion is so groundless, and so dangerous withal, that it only requires to be fully exposed in its true light, in order to be abandoned by every mature understanding.

Let it be observed, then, that it is reason which must judge of the evidences of the general truth and authenticity of any presumed revelation. The fact, that any system of moral instruction is really entitled to be received as a divine revelation, must be proved by evidence, of which reason, and reason alone, is the sole investigator and judge. That God should interfere, by especial and supernatural acts of his Almighty power, with the established course of events, in order to make a particular revelation of truth and duty to the minds of men, is a wonderful and extraordinary occurrence. We do not say that

it is an impossible occurrence. We do not say that it is antecedently altogether improbable. We do not say that it has never taken place. On the contrary, as Christians we are now firmly persuaded, that it *has* pleased God so to interfere in the moral affairs of his human creatures by especial revelations. But it is a wonderful and extraordinary thing to believe. It is not an occurrence of such a nature as ought to be taken for granted, as being undoubtedly true, the moment it is heard of. It is not a fact which we can determine in an instant, by the mere exercise of any one of our senses. It is a question of inferential truth, and of past facts, (to our minds at least in the present age,) which must be determined by diligent thought and inquiry, by careful examination of proofs, by deliberate exercise of the judgment. If our acceptance of the Christian religion, for instance, as a divine revelation, rests upon any other than such grounds as these, then it is not proper belief, it is not faith, it is only credulity and superstition. But these are all operations of the general faculty, or the several faculties, included under the name of reason. We do not say, that a formal and laborious examination of the external evidences of Christianity is necessary to be gone through by every believing mind. We do not insist on any one precise line of argument which must be followed out, in order to attain a satisfactory conviction of the truth of Christianity—as in the case of a mathematical or scientific proposition. Our view of the evidences of the Christian religion is very different. The great variety of them, by which they meet the wants and capacities of all minds, the readiness with which the most powerful of them suggest themselves to the simplest minds, without the necessity of formal and laborious inquiry,—these circumstances we cheerfully recognise. But still, however short and rapid the process, and however easy the act of judgment may be, every sound and firm conviction of the claims of Christianity as a divine revelation, must be acquired through an exercise and a decision of *reason*. Here is a Book which records certain alleged miraculous events, intended to prove the divine origin and authority of the moral teaching, both doctrinal and practical, which the same Book conveys. Now this is a bold

and astounding claim to be made upon our belief, in behalf of any Book. Moreover, we cannot be ignorant that a similar claim has been set up for other Books, as the Koran of Mahomet, and various other relations, oral and written, which we all agree to reject as gross impositions. How, then, shall we determine the particular claims of the Bible, of the Christian religion, to our faith and reverence? Surely, by thinking, reflecting, examining, judging; which are all acts of human *reason*. This, in reality, is the course pursued by all sober-minded Christian believers.

But, it should also be remembered, that it is reason which must interpret the *meaning* of the records of any divine revelation. After we are convinced of its general credibility, reason must determine what its real doctrines and lessons are;—otherwise, with all our reverence for the divine authority of the system in general, we cannot tell what to believe in particular. This knowledge, in the case of the Christian religion, is to be sought in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, especially the latter. But these books are only dead writings. They are not living teachers. They have no voice. They cannot explain to us their own meaning. They require to be interpreted; and this again is the office of reason, of the understanding, diligently exerting all its proper faculties upon the work.

Leaving all Popish superstitions,—let us consider the argument in reference to the true Protestant principle, the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture. How manifest it is, upon this principle, that all our belief and trust in every doctrine, every commandment, every promise, which we embrace as a portion of divine revelation, depends ultimately on the authority of reason. It is nothing to the purpose, to reply that the Scriptures are an infallible rule of faith, and therefore that there is no occasion for the least reliance on our own reason. The Scriptures are nothing but so many sounds or signs, until we come to apply our understandings to them, in order to ascertain their meaning. The meaning, properly speaking, is not in the books themselves, but in our minds. There was a meaning attached to the words of Scripture in the minds of Christ and his apostles;—there is a meaning attached to these words in our minds;—whether these meanings are precisely the same, is of course more than any

mortal can determine infallibly. If they are the same, or so far as they are the same, we are possessed of the knowledge of Christian truth. If they are not the same, or so far as they are not, we are in error. It is our conviction, that the sense which we assign to the words of Scripture agrees with the sense in which they were employed by Christ and his apostles. But plainly, this conviction is the result of the exercise of our own reason. It is the judgment of our own understandings. Therefore, if reason is not to be trusted, even when we are conscious that it is has been sincerely and carefully exercised, that we have abundant grounds on which to form our judgment, and that we have arrived at a clear and firm conclusion,—if reason is not to be trusted when it gives us this consciousness, then in fact we know not what are the true doctrines of revelation; for it is only by such an exercise of reason that we can attain this knowledge. The decisions of reason may sometimes be erroneous. There is no such thing as infallibility for man, in his present state of existence. But inasmuch as reason,—whatever instruments it may use, whether the works of nature, or the words of Scripture, is the sole ultimate guide we have, it is equally our duty to God, and for the interest of our own souls, that we should rely upon its calm, clear, and sober decisions. We may pray to God for his gracious help to deliver us from error, and conduct us into the way of truth; but this help we have no ground to expect otherwise than as the accompanying reward of the diligent use of our own reason.

Let it also be considered that it is reason which enables us to know, that the lessons of divine revelation, even when we believe that they really are divine, and when we believe that we correctly understand them, are worthy of attention and confidence. This will appear if we consider the subject thoroughly. By those applications of our reasoning faculty to which we have already alluded, we come to the conclusion that the Christian Scriptures contain a divine revelation, and that we correctly understand its doctrines and precepts. But of what importance is all this? How do we know, that therefore these doctrines are true, that they are wise, that they are good, that they are binding upon our hearts and consciences, and worthy of all accep-

tation? How do we know that they are not gross delusions, and hurtful to our souls, though they are divine? The answer to these questions, in the first step, is obvious enough. We know that the doctrines and precepts of revelation are worthy of supreme trust and confidence, because they proceed from God, who is an infinitely wise, holy, just, and merciful Being, faithful and gracious in all his ways, entitled to the unreserved confidence of our hearts, and the entire obedience of our lives. But how do we know all this? The answer, in the next step, must be, that we know all this concerning God from the dictates and decisions of *reason*. We must assume that we have this knowledge of the perfections and sovereignty of God, principally and fundamentally at least, from the light of reason; otherwise we have no solid grounds on which to confide in the truth and worth of revealed religion. If reason is not to be trusted, when we are conscious of the clearness and strength of its decisions, then the pillars of faith are shaken; they totter, and they must fall. It is in vain to say that the Scriptures themselves declare God to be wise, just and merciful, and therefore whatever he has caused to be delivered to us by his inspired servants must be right and good. It were childish, if we profess to argue on the subject at all, to argue in such a vicious circle. These assertions concerning God make a part of that very revelation, the general credibility of which cannot be assumed, without supposing it to be made certain or probable, from some other source, that God is true, that God is righteous and benevolent. And this other source can be no other than the light of reason.

We now proceed to the last, which is also the most disputable, if not the only disputable, branch of this subject. Reason must ultimately decide on the suitableness of the doctrines contained in any professed revelation to the moral attributes of God; and therefore on their intrinsic credibility. This may be the most difficult work which reason has to perform in connection with our belief and trust in divine revelation,—the work in which the feebleness and limitation of its powers may be most frequently experienced,—and therefore a work in which it should proceed at all times with humility and solemn deliberation. But we must deny that even here the exercise of reason is

to be abandoned, that the ultimate authority of reason is to be deserted. Even here reason has an office to perform, which is not only lawful, but necessary and right. It seems to us impossible for any man to dispute this position who takes pains to understand its meaning. The contrary position is surely an extravagance, which men are hurried into blindly, from not knowing or not considering what they say. The credibility of the doctrines of a supposed revelation, must depend not merely on the general evidences of its divine authority, but partly likewise on the accordance or disagreement of the doctrines themselves with the perfections of God, as recognized by reason. This principle must in some measure guide our judgements, otherwise it will follow that we ought to believe the most foolish, absurd, impure, and abominable doctrines,—provided they seem to us to make part of a revelation miraculously attested,—just as readily as we believe the most wise, holy, and gracious doctrines. The following case has been often put. Suppose that the Christian religion, having the same external evidence in its favour as at present, instead of teaching us that God is an all-wise and all-merciful Father, taught us that He is a capricious, unholy, and malignant Being, should we still be bound to receive and venerate it as cordially as we do at present? The man who denies that reason has any thing whatever to do with judging of the truth and wisdom of the doctrines of revelation, must, in order to be consistent, maintain even this absurdity. If he shrink from this, then he admits the principle, that reason may sit in judgment on the doctrines of revelation. And if the principle be once admitted, how shall one man, or sect of men, presume to determine, not for themselves alone, but for all other men likewise, precisely how far the principle shall be carried, exactly where its exercise is to be regarded as a pious concern for the honour of God, and where it becomes blasphemy? As well might one man presume to determine for all others, precisely what portion of their earthly substance shall be distributed in acts of charity. They are general obligations to which all are bound, but which every man must fulfil according to his own sense of duty, according to the dictates of his own judgment and conscience. To his own Master he standeth or falleth, and is not to be arro-

gantly judged by another. There is probably no man, sincerely embracing Christianity as a divine revelation, who rejects any doctrine which appears to him delivered in the Scriptures, merely because it does not harmonize with the dictates of his own reason. He only makes the apparent reasonableness or unreasonableness of a doctrine *one* consideration, amongst others, why he believes or disbelieves that such *is* the true sense of the Scriptures, that such *is* a true doctrine of revelation. All men, as we have seen, do and must avail themselves of this general use of reason;—and nothing can be more vain, nothing more presumptuous and uncharitable, than for them to accuse one another of infidelity and impiety, only because they do not agree in the results to which this exercise of reason conducts them.

On these grounds we are willing to rest the truth of our conclusion, that reason is the sole ultimate foundation of all that we believe concerning God, whether from nature or from revelation. What folly, then, it is, for Christians to depreciate and revile the authority of human reason. The very existence of such a prejudice is a sure proof that the true knowledge of revelation is at present obscured. It lays religion open to the strongest assaults of its enemies. It screens from detection its very worst corruptions. It obstructs and weakens its holiest and happiest influences. But the blessed God shall sweep away this impediment also from the path of his glorious gospel, and his word shall yet have free course and be glorified.

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#### ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS AND THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

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The questions that relate to the Religious department of Legislation are unquestionably among the leading ones of the present day: perhaps it may be said that they are the very first, both in real importance and in the attention which they excite. It cannot, therefore, be unsuitable in any one who has been led to make these points a subject of reflexion, to endeavour to bear his part in guiding the

public mind to right views respecting them. Such must be my apology for offering a few thoughts on this very debatable topic.

The *voluntary principle*, as it is called, is no doubt much commended to the public, not only by a very agreeable designation, (for who does not almost instinctively prefer what is voluntary to what is compulsory?) but by some plausible arguments on the score of equity and utility. It is asked, in that tone of confidence in which we ask questions to which we suppose that there can be but one answer, how it can be just to call on men to contribute to the support of religious worship in a form which they do not approve, and in which they consequently cannot partake? It is even represented as a violation of the rights of conscience to do so: and how, it is enquired, can religion be truly promoted by a support obtained for her in such a manner: which tends to corrupt one part of the church by the snares of worldly patronage, and to fill other portions, less favored, with envy and ill will?

These objections appear to me more plausible than sound. If it be indeed a just principle, that the civil government of a country ought not to call on the citizens to contribute to the support of any objects but such as they individually approve, and from which they receive a direct benefit, we must go on to conclusions in which even those who plead the principle on the present occasion, would hardly find much satisfaction in concurring. Then ought we to exempt the Quakers, and all others, who on principle may profess to object to war, from contributing any thing towards the national defence. Then all who lightly esteem the pursuits of the scholar and antiquarian, might think themselves wronged by a Parliamentary grant in support of the British Museum. Others may entirely disapprove of the expenditure incurred in prosecuting the discovery of the north-west passage. There are great numbers who think popular education rather an evil than a benefit: all these might raise a conscientious objection to the appropriation of any part of the public revenue in furtherance of this object. Many again, and very respectable men too, have contended against all legal provisions for the poor, deeming them fraught with the great-

est mischief both to the recipients themselves and to the state. These might petition, as a matter of right and conscience, to be relieved from paying poor rates. But there is no end of such instances, and instead of enumerating more, it may be asked, how many objects of public taxation there are, respecting the propriety of which there would be no dissentient voice? There may not probably be a single such object. And hence we may judge, in what an embarrassing predicament the government of that country would find itself, where the principle should be established of taxing no citizen except for objects which he himself approved, and in which he judged himself to have a direct interest.

In opposition to such truly absurd and mischievous notions, which in fact tend to nothing less than a dissolution of civil society, it is to be stated that the legitimate object of taxation is the *general* or *public good*, (the greatest good of the greatest number as Jeremy called it,) and that the legitimate judges of what conduces to that good, are the constituted authorities of every country, according to its established mode of government. If it appear to the legislature that a particular mode of public expenditure will on the whole be useful to the community, to raise a question whether every individual citizen would partake in the benefit, would be quite superfluous. And for the private citizen to set up his own judgment respecting the objects of public expenditure, as a test of their justice and legality, or of his obligations to contribute to them, is entirely to misconceive his civil position, and to fail in the duties which belong to it. He ought to consider that the levying and applying the public revenue is the legitimate function of the government of his country; that from the very nature of the case it lies in their discretion: and that as submission to their decisions is, in this matter, his duty, so the plea of conscientious objection to pay what they impose, is, to say the least, altogether mistaken and misplaced. He, having in this matter no discretion, has no responsibility. The great Teacher of Christians, according to that wisdom which ever appears admirable in proportion as it is contemplated, at once defines, with inimitable skill, the line of duty, and removes all grounds

of conscientious scruple. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsars, and unto God the things which are God's." When it is remembered that this decision was a reply to the Jews enquiring respecting the lawfulness of their paying tribute to a foreign conquerer, and that conqueror the head of an idolatrous empire, which appropriated no small portion of the public revenue to the maintenance of heathen worship, the case appears in the strongest possible light.

The conclusion to which these considerations lead us is this : that the only legitimate question which can be raised respecting a national religious establishment, is that which respects its public utility. If the legislature of the country, in their wisdom and discretion, deem such an institution conducive to the public weal, and direct their care to constitute and regulate it in such a manner as shall be most conducive to that object, then I hold that no man, however much as an individual he may dissent from the judgment of the legislature respecting the whole affair, has any right to consider himself aggrieved when called on to contribute his part towards its support, or, what is the same thing, to those general revenues from which its support is to be drawn. At least it is incumbent on those who think otherwise, to show that the religious and moral welfare of the community is not as legitimate an object of legislative attention as any other which can be entertained. We come then to the simple question, whether any public provision for the maintenance of religious worship and instruction be *useful*, or whether this matter be better left entirely to private exertions, or what is called the *voluntary principle* ?

It is not therefore a question of right or wrong, of justice or injustice, of principle or conscience, or any such thing, but simply one of utility. To attain, and steadily retain this view of it, is probably to advance far towards a just decision. Yet we must not expect to find the question respecting the utility of religious establishments one of very easy, or obvious, solution. It is obviously one in which much reference must be made to past history and experience, and this cannot be done either by slight investigation, or in a little space. It is a matter in which men of reading, experience, and reflexion, will form a

judgment the full justification of which cannot easily be conveyed in any written argument. Religious establishments must, of course, be liable to imperfection in constitution, and to abuse in administration, and hence will be productive of mixed results, partly good and partly evil. Hence will be opened a field for interminable debate on the relative amounts of each, and different opinions will be formed as to the side on which the balance lies. Such diversity of judgment will doubtless long continue, and for the present the most necessary thing is, that the question should be considered by all parties with moderation and charity: that all unnecessary scandals should be removed, and the Establishment, if it be retained, be made, by suitable reforms, as generally acceptable to all, and as little offensive or burdensome to any, as possible.

With all due deference and respect for the numerous and conscientious men who embrace the opposite opinion, I must avow that to my own humble judgment the arguments in favor of some national religious Institution, as opposed to the pure voluntary principle, appear to preponderate: provided however, that such religious Institution be founded on right principles, and in practice well conducted. For most, I apprehend, will admit, that a bad establishment is worse than none: and, for my own part, I shall not hesitate to say, that constituted as the Church of England now is, with all its existing dogmatism, exclusiveness, and secularity, I consider that as a bad Establishment, and one which, had we no hopes of its reform, we ought to wish abolished.

The benefits derivable from a good establishment have been often insisted on. It has been urged that in no other way can we secure that maintenance of decent and enlightened public worship and instruction throughout the land, which is admitted to be of the highest importance to the general welfare. The voluntary principle may, and doubtless will, do much, but it may be questioned whether it has yet been shown that it can be relied on for doing all that a wise and paternal government ought to deem it a duty to provide. And here it may be asked, whether there be not some inconsistency in many who advocate a nationally provided instruction in the elements of common education,

but object on principle to any similar provision in relation to the present matter. Is not the religious and moral instruction of the mass of the community as legitimate an object of public provision, as the common secular education of children? If it be otherwise, the special reasons should be pointed out, which I have never yet seen done in a manner which appeared satisfactory.

The object now mentioned, namely, that of making a certain and adequate provision for the religious and moral instruction of the community, is unquestionably the great and direct one in regard to which a religious establishment is maintained. But if it should be thought to be successfully contended, that without any such establishment the voluntary principle alone would, in this country, secure an adequate supply of respectable chapels and ministers throughout the land, it may still be enquired, whether this manner of attaining that object would on the whole be equally advantageous with the former. It seems probable that the principle on which the voluntary system must rely for success, must to a great extent, be religious excitement and sectarian rivalry. These no doubt can produce great exertions, but it is to be considered whether the enthusiasm, heat and animosity, likely to be elicited in the process, be not a great deduction from the benefit obtained. A rational and liberal Christian may see much reason to be of this opinion. Religious fanaticism is, perhaps, as great a public evil as religious ignorance, and the distinguishing advantage of a well constituted religious establishment, may lie in its providing, at once, against both these evils, whereas the voluntary system appears only to provide against one of them.

Closely allied to religious fanaticism is intolerance and persecution, and if a national establishment be a check on the former, it is so far also a security against the latter. Historically speaking, there can be no doubt that, in this country, religious liberty was never less enjoyed than during that short period when contending sects had overthrown the Established Church, and strove for ascendancy over each other with bitter animosity. A national church, calm by its constitutional stability, and dignified from its acknowledged precedence, seems well fitted to act the part

of a moderator in all such contentions, and to allay by its influence the animosity of jarring sects. Ascendancy in some one sect is, perhaps, inevitable ; but that ascendancy will probably be rendered more mild and tolerant, when enjoying a legalized and admitted precedence, than when struggling in the common arena with ambitious rivals. And this argument will receive additional force, if we reflect on the superiority of fortune, manners, and education, which may be expected in the ministers of an establishment above those of merely voluntary societies. It cannot be doubted that such advantages tend to promote mildness and moderation in those who possess them. On the whole, therefore, there seems to be much reason to regard the existence of some religious establishment as favorable to religious peace and liberty.

And if by the removal of creeds and subscriptions the minds of the national clergy were set at liberty to investigate truth, and form their opinions with freedom, there appears no ground to doubt that their situation would be pre-eminently favorable to the acquisition and diffusion of theological knowledge. For this their superior education and peaceful leisure preeminently adapt them. The ministers of voluntary sects are seldom so favored.

I have hitherto adduced no arguments but such as arise from those purely religious considerations which properly belong to the subject, and by which assuredly its merits must be tried. There are also, however, some collateral or adventitious considerations, which, in a political point of view, are not to be despised. A national religious establishment has always been regarded as a powerful auxiliary of the civil government. Many, indeed, will not view this argument with much favor ; but it is for them to consider whether they wish the government of their country to rest upon force, or upon moral influence. If they prefer the latter, then on reflexion this argument may appear of more weight to them. Nor can it be regarded as a trifling benefit that by the rank which a national church secures to the ministers of religion, it places them on a more equal footing with the upper classes of the laity, thereby promoting their social influence on the latter, especially on such as reside on their agricultural property. Many will no doubt view this matter very differently, but it may fairly be asked

whether the comparatively high tone of morality and humanity which distinguish the English aristocracy, be not, in part at least, owing to this cause.

Such are some of the grounds on which I conceive that the utility of a well-ordered religious establishment may be justly maintained, and which appear to me to decide the question against exclusive reliance on the voluntary principle.. I had intended to have submitted some remarks on Church Reform, but must reserve them for some future occasion.

T. F. B.

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## SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE RESURRECTION CONSIDERED.

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. Many subjects of thought although weighty and important in themselves, have a finite interest, for their interest is limited to the present existence of man ; the interest of the resurrection of our race is confined within no such limits, it extends itself beyond the boundaries of time, and may be said without any excess of language to be infinite, for the life in which it centres, and about which it is conversant shall never come to an end. In what manner will the Sceptic speak on this grand subject ? He will speak of the appearances of nature and the state of the world, of the frame and constitution of man, and the destruction inscribed on every thing human. He will say that in the vegetable world a constant succession is kept up, but each race in its turn blooms and fades and is gone ; that the same changes follow each other in the animal world, and the same end awaits each member of it. And even of man, the first of earth's inhabitants, the head and glory of creation, he will not speak differently. He will trace his gradual progress from infancy to age, notice the decay of his powers, and, finally, his union with the dust from which he sprung. " Is not that frame of which he once boasted," he will ask, " dissolved into dust, blown about by the winds of heaven, blended with the soil in which it is deposited, received into the ocean's deep foundations, and entering into new and endless combinations of matter ? And is not existence, therefore, completely destroyed—annihilation."

lated?" Perhaps he will speak of the power and will of God, and attempt to involve in doubt a revelation from Him which appears to be inconsistent with the order of nature, and is opposed to the general experience of mankind. Feeling the desire of immortality strong within us, can we admit these doubts to be a satisfactory refutation of the opinion which all ages and all men have held? Would they be satisfactory if no particular interest attached itself to the subject, and the acquisition of abstract truth were the only object?

There are few men who will presume to question whether the power of God is fully adequate to the production of such an effect as that to which the doctrine of a resurrection refers. The power of an Omnipotent Being can find no obstacles too great to be overcome. The unquestionable proofs of such a power exist on every side of us. They are seen—they are gloriously displayed, in the earth, in the solar system, in the universe; and we can scarcely measure the extent of a power adequate to the production of our own frame, enlightened as it is by mind, and warmed by affections. It is the work of nothing less than Infinite Power; and surely the same *exertion* which combined the elements of matter in man's physical frame, and lighted it up with the spark of divinity, is equal to the rekindling of the flame of life which death extinguishes. It is idle and futile to deny that the Creator, whose word gave existence to the universe and can swiftly destroy it, can renew those powers of life, and those perceptions of happiness which originated with him. Is then his will propitious to such a renewal and extension of the present life of man? Here Revelation steps forward to present a full and favorable reply. But the Sceptic may be met with the negative form of his own question, Is it *not* the will of God that man shall live and be happy in a future and higher condition of being? That will is favorable to human happiness. We perceive this in the arrangement of the things in the midst of which we live and move and have our being. It is seen in the physical and moral constitution, in our power of receiving pleasurable impressions and enjoying happiness, whether it proceed from the gratification of the senses or be of a more mental and refined nature. Are we not, moreover, capable of forming ideas of a future state and look-

ing to it as a consummation of our being and of carrying to a very exalted height our speculations upon its nature, prospects and duration ? We would say that the notions of mankind in every age concerning this great subject, however far they may have been removed from the truth and the hopes blended with them, however visionary may have been the foundation on which they rested, were indications of God's will—indications of his design to extend the existence of man beyond the limits of earth and to perpetuate his felicity. How else shall we account for the origin of those expectations which find a place even in the bosom of the savage—of that hope of immortality which appears to be an innate passion of it. That the ideas of men were crude, their hopes and expectations not founded on the most consistent and enlightened proofs, is nothing. They existed and we best account for their existence by referring it to Divine Providence ; and he who caused the hope to spring up and flourish in the human breast never designed it to wither before the time of its maturity should come.

And what does the Sceptic know of that very *order of Nature* which he arrays against the reality of a future life ? The extent of this order is and must be measured by a human standard. It is scarcely perceived by the enlightened mind. As mankind advances in knowledge, as investigations founded on knowledge are pursued and fresh discoveries made, the order of nature becomes more visible and is seen in greater extent. According to the state of philosophy at any particular era have been the conceptions of this order by mankind. Ignorance and error have contracted its limits ; knowledge and discovery have enlarged them. Once, for the Sun of all the heavenly host to turn round our little planet was a part of the order of nature. And were it not now ascertained that the caterpillar which devours our vegetables, changes first to a chrysalis and then to the beautiful moth, of course such wonderful transformations would not be included in the order of nature. But in the highest state of philosophy and science it is only judged of by that which is seen and known. Is there no part yet undiscovered ? none, which the ingenuity of man shall never be able to discover ? Or shall we say that an Infinite Mind can combine and put into operation only

that of which a finite mind can take cognizance ? Of the beautiful, grand, and harmonious system in which all objects are included, many parts are yet undiscovered ; it extends to invisible things, and can scarcely ever be known to man even under the highest possible developement of his powers in the present world. If we could take an enlarged and exalted view of it, we should perhaps discover it to be as much the order of nature that man should live his appointed time and undergo a change during the sleep of death to prepare him for an endless condition of being, as that the caterpillar should be wrapped in the shell of the chrysalis and then spring into the air a beautifully adorned butterfly. Nor does it avail to argue that a comparison between man and the lower animals forbids such an idea. The resemblance is not so exact as to assure us that if life becomes completely extinct in the latter, it must necessarily in the former. Every comparison of man with the animals over which he exercises the prerogative bestowed upon him by the Creator, raises him to a vast elevation above them. Nor does the contrast between their finite duration and man's infinite existence appear much more wonderful, than that which strikes us when their narrow pleasures and mechanical instincts and his high relish for happiness, his swelling affections, his transcendant powers and spiritual life, are brought under the view.

To us it appears that the order of nature does include the resurrection and eternal duration of man, for we consider such to be the original design of the Great Being to whom his frame and powers are owing. Death being his doom, we are not disposed to admit that the renewal of his life was an afterthought, but a part of the original plan according to which he was created. Designing all his rational offspring for the enjoyment of immortality, God enabled them in their thoughts of the future to enter upon the possibility of such a change, and to feel a desire of undergoing it ; he excited the hope in their breast as an indication, an indirect revelation of his will, and left them subject to doubt, until the fullness of the time should come when the grand and glorious truth might be indelibly stamped on the page of revelation.

But to resume our argument, for a mere statement of opinion can have but little weight ; nothing is discoverable

in the natural world, nothing in the character and operations of the Deity, effectually to silence the hope of immortality—to make it impossible or incredible that God should raise the dead. But more than this may be said; for even natural reasons may be found sufficiently strong and cogent to put to flight the objections of the unbeliever. Man does not attain to the perfection of his earthly being; his powers are capable of greater expansion than earth permits to them; the limited span of the present life does not suffice for their developement, their exercise, their exaltation; the flight of his mind is impeded by the weakness and maladies of his frame; and when he is becoming more than ever an intellectual being, decay wears down his energies and death extinguishes them. Nor does he find in his present condition that pure and exalted felicity for the enjoyment of which he appears to have been created. His disappointment is consequent upon the necessity of laborious exertion for the necessaries of life, and the overthrow of his choicest schemes; and it is aggravated by the folly and the criminality of his fellows. He is worn away by distresses for the infliction of which we find it difficult to account but by reference to a future state;—he is the victim of wrongs of which he receives no redress. His thoughts and wishes naturally point to a world where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; where his ardent and enterprising mind shall thread the mazes of science, and take in the full and dazzling rays of divine knowledge; where the flow of virtuous affection shall be rich, unceasing and perpetual, and where a serene and ineffable happiness shall satisfy the longings of his soul. And the great and good God who made him capable of ascending to such a height of intellectual glory, of enjoying such exquisite happiness, and of forming such lofty conceptions of his nature and final destiny—who by the very constitution of his mind and affections appears to indicate immortal happiness as the consummation of his being,—never designed that all shall fade away and vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision, nor leave a wreck behind.

W.

## UNION OF CHURCHES.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—In the number for March of your excellent little Periodical was given the heads of a plan for a “liberal Union of Christian Churches,” and you very properly invited your readers to a friendly discussion of the subject in your pages. Being no great casuist in these matters I waited for the present number, expecting the subject would be discussed by some of your able correspondents. In this expectation I have not been disappointed, as a very able and well written paper has appeared upon this interesting matter. As the writer has not, however, at all touched upon the rules which were propounded in your last, perhaps you will allow another individual to make a few observations upon them.

I quite agree with your correspondent B. as regards his proposed addition to the *Title* of the Union.

Principle 1 & 2, I think are quite approveable : but No. 3 neither appears in harmony with No. 2, nor is it a principle upon which a Union could well be founded. If I understand it right, it requires a *conformity* in the mode of Public worship among the Churches of the Union. If so, it certainly is highly objectionable as a principle of Union ; for upon this subject diversity of opinion and practice exists to a considerable degree, and I see no good which could possibly result from the recognition of such a principle, which in fact detracts from that perfect liberty now possessed by dissenting Churches. The *rules* proposed, as far as No. 5, appear proper and practically good, but 5 appears at variance with the right of equality—Christian *equality* ; which ought *most fully* to be recognised.—This rule recognises a *property* qualification.—Why not say the number of Deputies should depend upon the number of *members* belonging to each individual Church ; this would put the matter on a fit equality and give no unjust preponderance to the richer societies. I next object to No. 7, as being, to my feeling, too inquisitorial, and totally at variance with the free sentiment and feeling which so strongly exists among the liberal dissenters. And the Rule also seems to be completely neutralized, as the two clauses into which

it is divided render it useless. I have the same objections to urge against No 8—the first clause forbids what the second clause permits. The remaining four Rules appear to require modifying in several particulars, but as I propose with you rpermission to present to your readers a *new Code*, I will conclude by a reference to them, and shall be most happy to peruse the opinions of your correspondents upon the subject which I really consider as a *most important* one, and a plan which ought by no means to be suffered to die a natural death or even to fall asleep. It is pregnant with mighty advantages to the cause of Christianity and Christian truth.

I am, Sir,

Your very Obedient Servant.

Exeter, April 9th, 1837.

S.

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*Plan referred to in the above letter.*

PRINCIPLES.—1 and 2 as stated in page 279 in March number.

3. Unalienable right of every church in the Union in adopting or retaining that form of Public Worship which best suits the opinions and feelings of the members of each individual church.

OBJECTS.—1 same as that stated page 279.

2. To form a general fund, a large portion of which shall be applied in the way suggested in page 303 of April number. Another portion applied to the erection and repair of churches in the Union, and clearing off the debts now lying on any of said places of worship. Another portion to the establishment or aid of Sunday Schools, and the residue to be employed in the necessary expenses attending the management of the society.

RULES—1. Churches of any denomination to be allowed to join the Union provided they subscribe to the above Principles and Objects.

2. Each Church in the Union to form a fund in their own congregation, a moiety of which shall be transferred to the Union Fund at the conclusion of every quarter—the remainder to remain at their own disposal. (See No. 3.)

3. Each Church to choose deputies from among their

members according to the provisions of Rule 4. These deputies to be invested with full powers to represent the congregation who appoints them, and to have a reasonable sum allowed them for expences during their attendance on General or Local Assemblies, this to be paid out of the Congregational Fund. (See No .2.)

4. The Congregational Representatives to be chosen by list or ballot, every member or subscriber being entitled to one vote for himself, and one for each member of his family attending the church who shall have attained the age of 18. Every congregation consisting of less than 50 members to send one deputy, if more than 50 and less than 100 to send two ; if more than 100 and less than 200 three deputies, and so on.

5. Quarterly meetings of Deputies to be held in every Divison of the Union at which the ministers of the several Churches are expected to attend. At these meetings reports and communications from other divisions will be laid before the assembly, and business arising therefrom be transacted. At the first quarterly meeting of each year the deputies present to chuse a local President, Treasurer, and Secretary, the President to be the Corresponding Secretary of the division. These quarterly meetings to be held in rotation at different localities where Union Churches are situated.

6. Annual Meetings of Deputies and Ministers from all the Churches in the Union to be held at a convenient town sometime in the month of June or July, when a President, Treasurer, Secretary and Corresponding Secretary shall be chosen for the ensuing year (retiring officers to be re-eligible) and the general business of the Union shall be transacted.

7. At the last quarterly Meeting in each division of the Union a Report shall be drawn up by the local Corresponding Secretary submitted to the approbation of the meeting, such approved report to be forwarded to the General Corresponding Secretary 4 weeks at least before the annual meeting.

8. The General Corresponding Secretary will have to peruse and digest the various reports transmitted to him agreeably to Rule 8, to draw up a General Report, em-

bracing the essentials of the whole number and to present the same to the General Meeting when assembled.

9. The church or churches situated in the town where the General Meeting is appointed to be held, shall, a month previously to such a meeting, appoint a Committee of members not exceeding 12 individuals, exclusive of their Deputies and Ministers (who shall form a part of the Committee) make arrangements regarding the place of assembling, the routine of business and the comfortable accommodation of the expected Deputies during the meeting.  
N.B. This Rule to apply to the local quarterly meetings.

10. Applications for assistance from the Union Fund to be made first to the Quarterly Meeting in the district or division from whence the application emanates—If the quarterly Board approve of the same, then the Secretary to transmit the same to the General Corresponding Secretary whose business it will be to lay the claim before the General Assembly for their approbation or rejection.

11. All questions to be decided by Ballot and no pecuniary assistance granted except the application has 3-5ths of the meeting in its favor.

12. The Quarterly subscriptions within the Union shall be 1s or 4s per annum to be paid in advance (of course allowing Donations Benefactions or Bequests to any amount.)—It is recommended that weekly subscriptions of 1d be received by the Collector of any congregation in order to allow contributions from every individual however limited their means. In reference to Rule 2 it is suggested that a portion of the fund remaining in the hands of the congregation should be laid out in the formation of a Vestry Library to consist of Religious Books and Tracts. Tract Societies may be connected with the above objects.

13. The annual Report including the transactions at the Meeting to be printed in a cheap form, and sent to every church in the Union, in such quantities as may seem best suited to their wants, and that Copies be also transmitted through the Post to distant localities not in the Union, both abroad and at home, in order that complete publicity may be given of the progress and objects of the Union.

## COMMUNINGS WITH THOUGHT.

[FROM MRS. HEMANS.]

RETURN, my thoughts, come home !

Ye wild and wing'd ! what do ye o'er the deep,  
 And wherefore thus th' abyss of time o'ersweep,  
     As birds the ocean foam ?

Swifter than shooting star,

Swifter than lances of the northern light,  
 Upspringing through the purple heaven of night,  
     Hath been your course afar !

Through the bright battle-clime,  
 Where laurel boughs make dim the Grecian streams,  
 And reeds are whispering of heroic themes,  
     By temples of old time :

Through the north's ancient halls,  
 Where banners thrill'd of yore, where harp strings rung,  
 But grass waves now o'er those that fought and sung—  
     Hearth-light hath left their walls !

Through forests old and dim,  
 Where o'er the leaves dread magic seems to brood,  
 And sometimes on the haunted solitude  
     Rises the pilgrim's hymn :

Or where some fountain lies,  
 With lotus-cups through orient spice-woods gleaming !  
 There have ye been, ye wanderers ! idly dreaming  
     Of man's lost paradise !

Return my thoughts, return !  
 Cares wait your presence in life's daily track,  
 And voices, not of music, call you back—  
 Harsh voices, cold and stern !

Oh ! no, return ye not !  
 Still farther, loftier let your soarings be !  
 Go, bring me strength from journeyings bright and free,  
 O'er many a haunted spot.

Go, seek the martyr's grave,  
 Midst the old mountains, and the deserts vast ;  
 Or, through the ruin'd cities of the past,  
 Follow the wise and brave !

Go, visit cell and shrine !  
 Where woman hath endured !—through wrong, through  
 scorn,  
 Uncheer'd by fame, yet silently upborne  
 By promptings more divine !

Go, shoot the gulf of death !  
 Track the pure spirit where no chain can bind,  
 Where the heart's boundless love its rest may find,  
 Where the storm sends no breath !

Higher and yet more high !  
 Shake off the cumbering chain which earth would lay  
 On your victorious wings—mount, mount !—Your way  
 Is through eternity !

## ON PSALMODY.

SIR,—The Editorial hint contained in the notice to correspondents in the last number of the *Gospel Advocate*, has induced me again to take up my pen, and as "an admirer of psalmody" to trespass upon your pages, and perchance also upon the patience of some of your readers, who may possibly think that all this fuss about a "plain psalm tune," which any child can sing, is annoying and uncalled for. True, any and every child who is not woefully deficient in musical abilities may and ought to be able to sing a psalm tune. But children must be first of all taught. I would therefore, with all due humility, venture to throw out a few more hints upon this part of the subject, which may possibly be of service. If "the rising generation" were instructed in Psalmody, a very few years would suffice to raise this now degraded, passionless, soulless part of public worship, to a state of dignity and importance. Now I would propose, as means to this end, the following. The regular practice of Psalmody in families, and schools, when the heads of a household possess musical abilities and have received a musical education, this may be rendered a highly interesting as well as instructive occupation. Cold indeed must that parent's heart be, who can listen without feelings of deep emotion to the morning and evening hymn, melodiously sung by his own offspring. Years may pass away, and old age may come upon us, life's bitter troubles may harrass us, and worldly cares may sorely disquiet our spirits, but those voices, those infant voices, shall come to our memories as music from afar wafted over the face of the waters and rendered sweeter by distance. They shall often steal over us as does a charm. Amid the turmoil, the pure and holy melody shall seem to arise, and imagination shall again erect the family altar and embody the youthful choir. Nor will the practice of Psalmody be otherwise than pleasing to the children themselves. They will, if the matter be judiciously managed, look forward with pleasure to the nightly or the Sunday evening's practice, and may thus gain much solid instruction in what appears to them to be an amusement. But in order that these "family concerts" may be of real service, much will depend upon the taste

and talents of the parents or instructors. If their taste is vitiated, so also in all probability will the taste of the pupils become. The parent then will have a task of some delicacy to perform, even in instructing his children in Psalmody. It is absolutely necessary that a judicious choice should be made of the tunes which they learn. To this end let them be chosen from the publications of men of eminence in the musical profession *only*. There is a vast number of what are styled "collections of Psalm tunes," a very great proportion of which may be considered in the light of musical museums, in which are contained curious specimens of the combination of which the octave admits, and sundry ingenious devices of the tyro in the art of counterpoint. Here you have the Hallelujah Chorus marvellously condensed into a peculiar metre tune; there "Lewie Gordon" arranged as a psalm for four voices. One collection, indeed, I could mention in which far worse examples of vitiated taste are exhibited;—where not only the sublimest productions of our most eminent composers are curtailed of their fair proportions by the musical Procrustes, but where also the most common songs appear under the name of sacred psalms, the very words of which are also parodied, or *spiritualized*, to aid in exciting the *devotional* feelings. Can any one, then, Mr. Editor, wonder at the state to which Psalmody is reduced in this country, when such mischievous trash finds its way into the sanctuary, and is there sung as a fitting melody to God?—There are however collections which may be safely put into the hands of any parent for the instruction of his children, and which can hardly fail to produce in them a correct taste. Such are the volume of Psalms published by Horsley, in which are some of the finest specimens of Psalmody by the old masters, and many rich compositions of his own; a selection by Vincent Novello; and "National Psalmody" by B. Jacobs. When such men as these employ their time and talents in endeavouring to improve Psalmody, there arises some hope that it may become the more effective. Horsley's selection has this peculiar recommendation, that the tunes are so harmonized as to be sung in four, three, or two parts only. I now proceed to offer some remarks upon the style of singing. Children (and adults also) should not be taught a drawling manner of singing Psalms. Solemnity is required in this species of

music, but monotony is to be carefully avoided. If the tune "like a wounded snake drags its slow length along," it will fail of producing any effect. They should be taught to sing in an easy and natural manner, without any nasal twang, or what is called "singing through the teeth." It appears to me, that singing may be regarded as more melodious speaking, and those who bear this in mind will save themselves much unnecessary exertion, and will also acquire pure and legitimate tone. Especially they should be taught to sing in tune. This is perhaps the most difficult part of musical instruction. If a child is taught by one who himself plays or sings "false," or by an imperfect instrument, that child's ear will in all probability be rendered incorrect, and the same notes will be defective in his voice. Now as all instruments, with the exception of stringed instruments, have their scale imperfect, and as the latter is perfect only in the hands of a finished performer, I would propose the following simple method of teaching to sing in tune. Let children (or adults) in the first instance learn to sing their gamut by the aid of a stringed instrument having its finger board divided, like the monochord, with mathematical accuracy, and at each division let there be placed a slightly raised fret. The youngest practitioner cannot then fail to play the scale in tune, and he will learn to sing it in tune also. When the scale is acquired, psalm tunes may be learned in the same manner. The method proposed is simple. I trust it may also be found effective. In many Infant and Sunday schools attempts are made to teach the children to sing, and it is ludicrous enough to hear the little knaves at the very top of their tiny voices screaming out their mimic chorus, while the master endeavours in vain to "compel them to harmonical unity" with the aid of his clarionett—dubious of its own purpose! The occupation is well enough as an amusement for the urchins, but they will never become psalm singers under such tuition. To be of utility a very different system must be adopted.

I now go on to offer, in conclusion, a few remarks upon congregational singing. In dissenting congregations, where a liturgy is not used, the musical is the only part of the service in which the members can generally take a part. They ought then, for the time, to consider themselves as the servants and ministers of the temple, and

as occupied in performing a sacred and important duty. Is it a small matter, to "draw near to God with the lips while the heart is far from him?" Or to engage in his service with a careless indifference of which in other matters we should be utterly ashamed? Yet in the majority of cases this part of public worship is performed by congregations in so slovenly, apathetic, or uproarious a manner, as to give pain or disgust to the sober minded. I would therefore suggest, that congregations should occasionally assemble for the express purpose of becoming qualified for the more decent and solemn discharge of this duty; and I would further hint that a person's devotion may be much disturbed by the stentorian bellowings of an enthusiastic neighbour. Let such then learn moderation, and consider that the most powerful effects of music are produced not by mere loudness of sound, but by the union of numbers of voices, none of which predominate over the other, where there is a full and (so to speak) palpable body of tone, where all are mingled together, as Milton has it, "in perfect diapason." Such, from the accounts of many travellers, is the character of the congregational singing in Germany, and such ought it to be also with us. It were to be wished that the indifferent should be raised from their apathy, and be induced to consider that the great end of Psalmody is not answered, if they merely attend to the singing of an established choir without, according to the best of their ability, lending their own aid. I know of few spectacles calculated more powerfully to affect us, than that of a Christian congregation every member of which is devoutly engaged in the performance of this important part of public worship, where all agree with one heart and one voice to "praise the Lord" and to ascribe "Glory to God in the highest." May, then, the few hints now thrown out, be of service in bringing about this highly desirable state of things, and in effecting, in some measure, a reformation which appears to be so much required by

#### AN ADMIRER OF PSALMODY.

P.S. I must still defer to a future opportunity a sketch of the list to which I referred in my last communication; and perhaps, if you think it likely to interest any of your readers, I may then supply a rule for the division of the finger board of a stringed instrument, for the purpose alluded to in this letter.

*"The Leading Doctrines of Unitarian Christianity : a Sermon, preached in Christ Church Chapel, Bridgwater, on Sunday Evening, March 5th, 1837, By THE REV. WILLIAM JAMES, Pastor of the Congregation; occasioned by a general report of his having renounced Unitarian views of the Gospel. Bridgwater : Awbrey ; London, Mardon ; Bristol, Philp ; Exeter, Balle ; Sidmouth, Harvey ; Crewkerne, Jolliffe. 1837."*

Mr. James has shewn himself, in this sermon, well prepared to give, not only a clear account of his Unitarian faith, but some very strong reasons for holding to the profession of it without wavering. The sermon was occasioned, it appears, by a prevalent report that the author, who had recently been delivering some doctrinal Lectures, had at length undergone a complete change of opinion. Mr. James, therefore, has here given a plain, brief statement of his views. on all the principal points of Christian belief. We are enabled to say, that if his mind *has* lately undergone any great change in this respect, he must have been rather a heterodox Unitarian in former times. His present sentiments will be recognized, we think, as those of the religious denomination to which he belongs ; and they are stated here, as we always wish to see them stated, with Scriptural simplicity and fervour. The following passage gives the writer's personal experience of the value of the Unitarian faith :—

" Most of you, my brethren, are familiar with the circumstances which have induced me to direct your thoughts to a controversial discourse this evening. Having recently concluded a course of doctrinal Lectures, I certainly did not expect to be so soon called on to speak of the principles by which we are distinguished from Trinitarian believers. But reports have been raised and spread of my having renounced those views of the Gospel of which you have so frequently heard me speak from this place, and I, therefore, think it due to myself and to you, publicly to declare that they are utterly destitute of foundation. So far, indeed, from being disposed to abandon Unitarianism, every week strengthens my conviction of its truth and importance. The more I study the Bible, the more I am satisfied that it is the doctrine of Christ. It appears to me to be in beautiful harmony with reason and revelation, to contain all that a sinful creature needs, all that is calculated to fill the soul with pious trust and love here, and to prepare it for the presence and kingdom of God hereafter. I believe it to be the faith once delivered to the saints, the religion which was taught by the Redeemer for the regeneration, and the salvation of man. To me " it seems to come from the Scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters and as articulate

and clear as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in my ears." To me it seems a doctrine according to godliness, a doctrine whose character and tendency is to exalt the mind, to strengthen the devout affections, to purify the heart, and to promote practical holiness.

" I was brought up in the belief of the Trinity, and of the commonly received articles of the popular faith. It was after much reading, and I hope diligent enquiry, with prayer for divine assistance, that I saw reason to change my views. My separation from my early friends, in opposition to the wishes and feelings of those with whom I was most dearly connected, was attended with no small degree of mental suffering ; but I was persuaded it was the path of duty, and never have I regretted that I pursued it. My religious sentiments have been to me a source of comfort and delight, and I esteem it an honour, far higher than any that wealth or mere worldly distinction could confer, that I am privileged to preach them to others.

We give another extract, relating to Unitarian view of the dignity of Christ, compared with the orthodox subtlety of two natures.

" We will yield to the authority of the word of God, but not to *inferences* from texts which seem to us to require a different explanation ; and we say, with all due respect for the many good men who hold this doctrine of two natures in Jesus Christ, that it seems to us, inconsistent with the truth, and altogether unsupported by the Scriptures. Our own views of Christ, we think, are much more interesting and affecting. We reverence him as the appointed Mediator between God and men ; as the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; as the messenger of Divine mercy, the abolisher of death and our guide to immortality. We believe that he is an infallible Teacher, a glorious Redeemer ; that he is gone up on high to carry on the great purposes of infinite wisdom, and that " he ever liveth to make intercession for us." We believe that we must come to him if we would find happiness, and obtain salvation, and reach heaven. We believe that his words were the words of God ; that his miracles were the power of God ; and that in his Godlike character and spotless life were displayed to human gaze, a moral representation of the purity, compassion, and benevolence of the invisible Deity. We believe that he and the Father are One,—One, not in *nature and essence*, but in design and object, in will and purpose, in love and affection for the souls of men. Whatever opinions we may hold of the *nature* of him who is thus exalted in *office*, and who has received from God " a name which is above every name," we all agree to honour him as the beloved son of God, and to acknowledge his claims to our faith, gratitude and obedience. We all believe he is appointed to raise the dead at the last day, and to judge the world in righteousness. In his *name* we pray ; through him we come to the Father ; and from his lips, we hope, if we are faithful, notwithstanding the calumnies of our censorious brethren, to receive a welcome to the mansions of everlasting glory.

" Such, my brethren, are our views of the character and office of Jesus Christ. I speak as unto rational, serious, and accountable beings, judge ye what I say."

## SOMERSET AND DORSET ASSOCIATION.

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A Meeting of this Association was held at Taunton on Good Friday last. The state of the weather was exceedingly unfavorable, but many visitors were present, and as the Taunton friends formed of themselves a numerous party, the meeting was interesting and exhilarating as well on account of the numbers present as for the zeal by which it was animated.

The religious service of the day was commenced by Rev. S. Walker, followed by Rev W. James. The sermon, a very original and powerful specimen of pulpit oratory, was delivered by the Rev. J. Cameron, recently settled at Dorchester; the text John xvi, 33, "I have overcome the world!" The meeting for business was held immediately after the service. After the usual thanks had been voted, Mr. Montgomery gave an account of his correspondence with other Societies, and Mr. Whitfield read reports from the Yeovil, Bridport, and Bridgwater congregations. A resolution was unanimously passed that the Association should hold, in future, an annual meeting, on the Tuesday of the week preceding Whitsuntide, and that its next meeting (in 1838) should take place at Dorchester: Mr. Montgomery undertaking the office of preacher. Other resolutions were adopted to give increasing energy to the Association, and success to its exertions; and the Rev. J. Cropper of Exeter, who was present on the occasion, assured the meeting of the cordial desire of the Devon and Cornwall Association to co-operate in promoting its great objects.

A numerous party met together to dine, Dr. Blake kindly undertaking the office of president. The afternoon was enlivened by the presence of the ladies, chiefly of the congregation, and improved by the interchange of sentiments friendly to civil and religious liberty. The speakers were principally the Revds. Whitfield, Cameron, Walker, Montgomery and Cropper, and Messrs. Leigh and Cox, who united in expressing their attachment to Unitarian Christianity, and in calling upon each other and all who heard them, to assist in its promulgation, that it may rise still more rapidly than it has done upon the ruins of mis-named orthodoxy and bigotry.

An unusual feature, but a very interesting one, of these meetings, was a supper, at which nearly 140 persons of both sexes, were present. It was a gratifying sight to behold the rich and poor thus met together, touched by the spirit of harmony among themselves and by good feeling towards the rest of the religious world, and bearing their united testimony to the truth and sanctity of their common faith. As a congregational meeting Mr. Mongomery must have looked upon it with peculiar interest and grateful pleasure. He stood in an enviable situation, surrounded as he was by kind and zealous friends, and must have felt encouraged to go on with his important and arduous work by the expression of their cordial attachment and approbation. The proceedings of the day were closed at an early hour by an appropriate prayer from Mr. Cropper.

## LEWINSMEAD CONGREGATIONAL TEA MEETING.

The fifth anniversary of the Congregational Tea Meeting was held on Good Friday last, in the Lewins-mead School buildings, Bristol ; and we have much pleasure in noticing that the interest in these meetings continues to increase, and to diffuse its beneficial influence among all classes.

Although the weather was unusually severe, a large portion of the congregation assembled in the chapel at 4 o'clock, and were entertained with sacred music, of the first description, vocal and instrumental, until the tea was announced, when about 250 of the members of the congregation adjourned to the rooms prepared for their reception ; which were decorated with paintings and portraits of some of the excellent of the earth, of whom it may be truly said "the world was not worthy ;" many of whom endured persecution of the severest kind, for their attachment to that cause which they considered the only one "just to God and safe to men."

After tea, J. B. ESTLIN, Esq. took the chair ; and after reading the following sentiment,—*Long continuance and increasing usefulness to the Lewin's Mead social meetings ; may they more and more conduce to cherish feelings of Christian love amongst ourselves, and towards all our brethren of mankind*—entered into a general view of the peculiar features of Unitarianism, and noticed many of the reasons for dissent from generally entertained opinions. In drawing the attention of his auditory to the peculiar situation of Unitarians in society, he strongly impressed upon the young the propriety of not allowing themselves, in the desire to conform to the customs of society, to forget the faith of their fathers. The chairman concluded a speech which produced great effect on the audience, by calling on Mr. G. W. Hall to respond to the following sentiment—*Prosperity to the Lewin's Mead Congregation ; may they ever evince, in the daily intercourse of life, the practical fruits of those lessons of faith, hope, and charity, which have for so long a time been earnestly enforced upon them. Our heartfelt wishes for the welfare of our much revered and now sole pastor, Dr. Carpenter, twice chosen by a grateful people, whose love and veneration for him grow with the growth of years : may the retrospect of this long-continued connection more and more endear the congregation and pastor to each other. May whosoever shall be chosen to fill the vacancy among us be of like spirit with him who is gone to occupy another sphere of usefulness and Christian activity.*

Mr. HALL stated, in a very energetic and able manner, his concurrence in the sentiment, and entered into a review of the labours of Dr. Carpenter, and the frequent attacks made on him,—which he always met in the true spirit of Christian love and forbearance ; and by his life showed the purity and blessedness of that faith of which he was so able a defender.

Dr. CARPENTER then addressed his assembled flock in strains of glowing, fervent, heartfelt piety and love, at a very considerable length, and produced an effect which will, it is hoped, be recollected for many a year, and tend, if possible, to endear him more closely to a congrega-

gation who are highly privileged in having such a guide, councillor, and friend.

The next sentiment introduced from the chair was—*Greater prosperity to the smaller Unitarian congregations, and a speedy settlement of permanent ministers to occupy all vacant pulpits.*

Mr. J. PHILP, on being called, observed, that he cordially hoped the desire of the sentiment might soon be realized; and pointed out the advantages those enjoyed who were favored with a regular ministry, and their duty to show, by their constant attendance on public worship, their estimation of the privilege.

The next sentiment introduced was—*The Unitarian cause in general. Though we constitute a sect every where spoken against, may we show that good can come even out of Nazareth. May our schools flourish, our numbers extend, our faith strengthen, our good works abound, and especially may it be made increasingly manifest, that Unitarianism is indeed a religion for the poor of this world.*

Mr. H. EVANS addressed the meeting, and noticed the various institutions connected with Lewin's Mead, particularly the schools, to which he earnestly invited the attention of all, and their active co-operation in sowing that seed which, under the blessing of God, might bring forth—some forty, some seventy, and some an hundred fold.

The Rev. Dr. MORELL (formerly of Brighton) in a very able and argumentative speech, spoke to the following sentiment—*Dissent without sectarianism, and piety without bigotry: may the firm and consistent avowal of our opinions never lessen our respect for the conscientious professors of a different faith.*

The CHAIRMAN then read the following sentiment—*His Majesty's Ministers: our most cordial thanks to them, in the name of Christian philanthropy, for their zealous and judicious services in the cause of freedom—civil and religious.*

Mr. HARWOOD, jun. responded to this sentiment, and very ably pointed out the propriety of the introduction of expressions of approbation from Christian assemblies to their rulers, when they were introducing laws calculated to further the cause of Christian liberty and good-will.

The following sentiment was received with the most kindly feeling—*Honour and thankfulness to our American fellow-labourers in the great purposes of Christian truth and social improvement: may the bonds of brotherhood between us be continually strengthening and extending; may our respective services be pursued under the elevated and refining spirit of the Gospel of Christ, and have the blessing of the Universal Father.*

To this sentiment Dr. CARPENTER responded, and paid a just tribute to the services of Channing and Tuckerman, Ware, &c., and noticed the circumstance of the daughter of Dr. Tuckerman being present at our social meeting.

After a very interesting communication from Mr. OSLER, relative to the Orphan Charity established by poor Catholics in Dublin, expressions of thanks to the chapel choir, who, by their kind entertainment in the afternoon, had delighted *all* who heard them; and a vote of thanks to the Committee and Chairman, the proceedings of this in-

teresting day were closed by a suitable paryer, to the God and Father of all, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may not be amiss to remark that the inclemency of the weather prevented the attendance of many friends from Bath, &c., whose company would have added to the pleasure ; but we may aver that at the close of the day, *all* who had the happiness of being present, could with propriety say—the hours thus spent were among the happiest of their lives ; and we trust such meetings will be cherished and increased by all our societies.

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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The country still remains very much *in statu quo*, as regards its public affairs. The liberal ministry continue in place, but, from some cause or other, manifestly weakened of late in the House of Commons. This appears to have raised the hopes of the opposite party, that their turn to govern may again be near at hand. It must be allowed that they have not been over scrupulous in the means they have employed to accomplish this end. No stone has been suffered to remain unturned. No opportunity has been missed to assault and shake the government. Every department of the public policy of the ministers has been tried, foreign and domestic, with a view to discover some weak point where a successful blow at their stability might be given. But hitherto they have been able to keep their gronnd ; and we trust they may still continue in office ; for we can imagine no possible change, in the present state of parties, which would not be a calamity to the nation.

The Church Rate measure has made no advance through the forms of Parliament since our last publication. Lord John Russell, on being asked when it was intended to proceed with it, replied that he was not prepared to fix any day. This has been interpreted by the eager Conservatives, to mean that the measure would be abandoned ; but we see no just grounds for such an inference :—their ‘ wish was father to that thought,’ and we hope they will yet be disappointed. The government plan for the abolition of this impost, (as we anticipated would be the case,) has evidently grown in public favour, since there has been time for the country to understand and consider it maturely. It may be good policy in the ministers,

therefore, not to push the measure forward too rapidly. Already the idle alarm and foolish misconceptions, which the high-church party at first contrived to stir up in regard to this measure, are beginning to die away, and the eyes of such as had been grossly blinded respecting it are beginning to be opened. The proposal will, at all events, have had the effect of bringing a great deal of sound and necessary information on the subject before the public mind. Several excellent pamphlets have already appeared, explaining the true history and nature of Church Rate. The Attorney General has rendered a timely service to the liberal cause in this way, by his pithy and decisive letter to Lord Stanley. He has given the sanction of his high legal authority to the fact, that this tax arose at first from encroachment and imposition. "Church rates," he says, "are certainly not of the remote antiquity which has been supposed by some, and there can be no doubt that in this country, all the expences attending divine worship were originally defrayed by the Church itself, from a portion of the tithes." He is equally clear as to the distinction between the nature of Church Rate and the nature of Tithe. "I must observe," he says, "that in England the Church Rate never was a charge upon the land; and in this respect, as well as others, is clearly distinguishable from tithes, which can in no respect be considered a payment by the occupier of the land of any thing that ever was his." Sir John Campbell is likewise quite positive, that if the majority of parishioners vote that there shall be no rate, there is no process of law by which a single individual can be compelled to pay one farthing for these purposes. He says, "what I maintained, and do maintain, is, that a legal Church Rate can only be made by a majority of the parishioners in vestry assembled; and that if they meet and refuse to make a rate, *there are no means by which the rate can be raised.*" He cites numerous cases and authorities to establish these points; and all this will not be forgotten, whatever may be the fate of this particular measure of the government.

The Irish Municipal Corporations Bill has been suffered to pass the second reading in the House of Lords; but without the faintest signs of its being allowed to become law. There was little discussion on it, as the Peers, after a

solemn preparatory meeting at Apsley house, determined to adopt the policy of destroying it in Committee. It will probably be made a very tedious business, to end in nothing but the indignant rejection of the returned Bill by the Commons; unless the ministry should resign, or the parliament be dissolved, from some other cause, before the Lords have finished their unpopular work.

Some of the newspapers have given a summary of the intended Act for the amendment of the new Marriage and Registration Laws. We have not seen any copy of the Bill itself, but if this newspaper account of it be correct, it seems to us very deficient. The amendments appear to relate entirely to certain unintentional omissions and clerical errors in the former Act; but there is no provision for getting rid of those parts of the Marriage Law which are generally understood to be obnoxious to Dissenters, the publication of the notices at the poor House, and the presence of a registrar at the chapel when a marriage is contracted; nor do we perceive that there is any provision for ensuring the registration of births, which seems a great defect in the law as it stands. But probably there is some mistake; the information which the journals have given us may not be complete.

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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*We cannot comply with the request of "A Lover of Truth and Consistency";—and we fear that if we did comply, we should please him less than by our silence. The welcome communication of "J. R. S." is received.*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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VOL. IV.

## SPECULATIONS ON THE COURSE OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY.

In tracing the long and changeful course of events, which make up the internal history of the universal Christian Church, the mind naturally desires, if possible, to reduce them to some kind of *order* in its own conceptions. It must be evident, that we do not mean a chronological order merely ; for that is easily obtained, with sufficient accuracy for almost every useful purpose. But we mean a logical or moral order, having reference to the distinct nature, causes, and effects, of the great changes which have occurred in the profession and practice of this divine religion. It is obvious from a single glance at the broad stream of ecclesiastical history, from the ascension of Christ to the present times, that the general body of his followers have received and viewed his religion very differently at different periods ; that their Christian calling has operated variously in its leading effects on their minds and conduct, insomuch that the religion itself has appeared, from time to time, to assume quite a different countenance. It is rather with the intrinsic character of these changes that we have to deal at present, than with the external causes by which they have been produced and influenced, or the accidents of various kinds by which they have been accompanied ;—though something we may have to say, likewise, on these last mentioned topics. We are not entirely unconscious, that there may appear to be some degree of uncertainty in the views we are about to submit to the reader's attention on this subject. There is in the very nature of the subject, as we are fully aware, some scope for fancy, and some temptation to theorize. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to find that our views concerning it seem to others less distinct, and less correct, than they seem to our own minds. Nevertheless, as we are persuaded that these views have a considerable foundation in truth,—as they are sanctioned, in a good

measure, by men whose judgments we hold superior to our own,—and especially, as they afford good and cheering prospects of the future triumphs of the Gospel, we venture to present them here for serious consideration.

There appear, then, to have been four or five marked *eras* in the history of the Christian religion, distinguished from one another by reference to the light in which the religion has been principally viewed, during those several eras, by the generality of its professors.

First, let us examine Christianity as it appears in the heavenly discourses of our Saviour himself, those earliest and purest exhibitions of its peculiar spirit. Viewing it as it here presents itself to our contemplation, we should certainly regard the Christian religion as being almost exclusively a system of *practical morality and piety*. Its grand object is spiritual regeneration. It is addressed to the hearts and consciences of men, as sinners, as creatures alienated from their Maker by the wickedness of their lives, but still accountable to him for the moral character of all their dispositions and actions. It is a loud summons from God, delivered by Christ, to call men to repentance and amendment of life. Jesus does not commence his ministry by insisting on the reception of any particular system of doctrines, but by insisting on a more earnest, faithful, and devout compliance with the requirements of the moral law. He does not employ himself in disputing, still less in dogmatizing, on questions of mere belief, respecting the nature of the Deity, or the mysterious ways and decrees of the divine government. This, as we shall have further occasion to observe, is the leading feature of Calvinism, of reputed Orthodoxy in all its forms, but not of primitive Christianity, as it appears in the instructive parables and lessons of our great Teacher. He employed himself in seeking to purify the souls, and to reform the conduct of mankind, in all that relates to *duty*, in the highest and most comprehensive sense of that word, our duty to one another in all the connections of life, our duty to God, the Author of life, and the Father of our spirits. All his labours were directed, not to the establishment of a new system of speculative doctrine, but to the production of a new spiritual birth, a thorough moral regeneration, in the prevailing dispositions of all who should

become his disciples. The best possible way, perhaps, to judge of the true and original spirit of Christianity, is to study the character of Christ himself; for it is undeniable, that he embodied and manifested the true spirit of his religion in his own character. Now, no person, endowed with any soundness of mind, and speaking honestly, would ever think of representing our Saviour as being distinguished above all men for the acuteness and profundity of his intellect, in dealing with points of belief considered merely as such. His judgment was, indeed, wonderfully correct, prompt, strong and decisive; but it was a *moral* judgment;—so far at least as he displayed it in the course of his ministry, it was a moral, not a metaphysical or philosophical judgment. It was *wisdom*, in the highest and most exact sense of the expression. His discernment was perfect, his conceptions were of the purest and most exalted order, in all that relates strictly to right and wrong, to good and evil, to the weakness and corruption, or to the salvation and improvement of the human soul, in all that immediately concerns its moral faculties and its spiritual interest in God. But we cannot say that he was, or would have been, pre-eminently distinguished in treating questions of doctrine, requiring subtle discrimination, continued and severe argument, ingenious or profound processes of thought. Still less, if possible, can it be said that the great Originator of our faith was a bold and zealous dogmatist, prescribing a *creed* for his followers, (in the usual sense of the word,) by his own divine authority alone, without condescending to the use of argument. There is a remarkable simplicity, in these respects, to be observed in the entire character of his mind and teaching. We do not dispute that he was great in understanding; but once more we venture to say, that his chief pre-eminence, his glorious and yet unapproached pre-eminence, was not so much intellectual, as moral and spiritual. He was, as far as it can be exhibited on earth, the perfection of moral wisdom and goodness, of holiness and love, of purity, righteousness, and mercy;—in short, of all those qualities which we must suppose to constitute man's likeness to God, rather than of those qualities, such as mere knowledge and opinion, which belong exclusively to man as a rational but erring creature. Such we feel to be the

character of Christ, and it is a faithful expression of the true spirit of his religion, as it was displayed to the world in its earliest and purest form. It was then altogether a moral system, having the moral purification and elevation of the human soul as its only direct objects. In this form Christianity appears in the New Testament, especially in the four Gospels. But in the apostolic Epistles, unavoidably, from the altered circumstances of the Church, we meet with some signs of the *second era*, the peculiarities of which we next proceed to consider.

This second era was distinguished by the prevalence, throughout the Church, of a spirit of *doctrinal speculation and controversy*. Even towards the close of the apostolic age, as we have already observed,—especially in the mixed churches, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, established by Paul,—this spirit began to be manifested. It was the unavoidable consequence of the union, in the profession of one common faith, of people whose previous social and moral circumstances, whose entire intellectual and religious education, had been so very different as those of Jews and Gentiles. But the state of things in this respect during the latter days of the apostles, was *only* the faint beginning of that blaze of fiery disputation and contention, concerning points of doctrine, which soon afterwards, and for several centuries, spread throughout the Christian world. It may be truly said, that *this* now became the prominent feature of the new religious profession: it was the chief occupation of the Church of Christ, as far as it could be understood from its general public exhibitions of itself, in the conduct of its leading members. Instead of that pure zeal for the moral and spiritual reformation of souls, which we meet with in the New Testament, the pages of ecclesiastical history now present us with little else than a violent conflict of mere opinions, on all the vainest or most inscrutable topics of theological speculation. The eminent converts to the Gospel from among the students of heathen philosophy, were undoubtedly the great authors and promoters of this new state of things in the Christian Church. The nature of Christ, of the Logos, and of God, afforded one of the most fruitful sources of this kind of contention. The questions respecting free will, the operation of divine grace, unconditional election, the resur-

rection of the body, the millenium, and almost numberless other topics still more curious, which it is unnecessary to mention, contributed afterwards to furnish food for the busy spirit of speculative inquiry. The splendid intellectual gifts and remarkable skill of such disputants as Origen, and many others, from Justin Martyr to Augustine, were accidentally, as it would seem, very much in favour of the prolongation of this controversial age during four or five centuries. No doubt, it may be said, with much truth, that these learned broils do not comprise the entire history of the Christian Church during this period,—that there was still, together with or in despite of this rage for controversy, much sincere practice of Christian piety and virtue, and much genuine zeal for the salvation of souls. We shall cheerfully acquiesce in the truth of this statement,—especially as regards the earlier portion of this age, for two hundred years, at least, after the departure of the apostles. It is not to be supposed that these eras, the existence of which we are seeking to establish, did not in some measure run into one another:—such is the case with all distinguishable portions of human history. It were absurd to contend, that when the speculative and controversial spirit was awakened, all simple and efficacious faith in God and Christ, with all their moral fruits, entirely ceased. But we are mistaken, if the former had not, in this second age, superseded the latter, if doctrinal speculation had not taken the place of faith and love, and zeal for theological opinions risen above zeal for the righteousness of God, as the *distinguishing peculiarity* of the Christian Church.

This internal state of the Church, in combination with political circumstances, especially the conversion of the Roman Emperor, gradually brought on the priestly and superstitious despotism of the middle ages. One of the most recent ecclesiastical historians, speaking of the fourth and fifth centuries, thus clearly describes the process of mutation from one condition of the Church to the other. “The simplicity of the old articles of faith tempted the disputants on either side to appeal to them, each, according to his own interpretation, accusing the other of heresy. This at length brought the questions before the hierarchy, who now began to claim the exclusive right of deciding upon all questions of faith, and were always ready

to seize upon any opportunity thus afforded them of interfering in the mere theological disputes of the day. And this tendency to pursue their own interest, they were now at less pains to disguise, inasmuch as they were left more free from the necessity of struggling against Paganism, and were at the same time supported by the strong arm of the state. Thus the religious controversies soon assumed a new character. Formerly, they were confined to particular provinces ; but now they divided the whole Christian world. To end them, the emperors called general councils, whose decisions became the laws of the realm, and were enforced by the civil power. Formerly, the councils, which were assembled to judge of heretics, contented themselves with guarding against innovation ; but now, the general councils, invested with the highest ecclesiastical dignity, and supported by imperial power, went on to erect their decisions on disputed points into positive articles of faith. All this contributed to develope the system of doctrines with great rapidity, whilst the freedom of speculation had proportionably narrowed."

Thus was introduced the *third distinct era* in the history of the Christian religion,—the age of complete *ecclesiastical and secular domination*, combined to crush all freedom of thought, all liberty of conscience, and to establish a servile obedience to mere authority in matters both of faith and of worship. In this superstitious and slavish condition the whole Christian world remained for nearly a thousand years. The spiritual dominion of the Papal Hierarchy was widely, almost universally extended, and deeply rooted in the fears and prejudices of almost all the followers of Christ. There was now neither the busy stir of inquisitive intellect, searching after speculative truth, or deluding itself with new speculative errors, as during the second era,—nor was there any return to the pure faith, holy sentiments, and godly practices, of the earliest times of the Gospel. The voice of free controversy was silenced by the dread of certain persecution ; the truth of opinions was not allowed to be canvassed, for the Romish Church had settled the creed of all Christendom, and, besides the use of her own spiritual terrors, had the entire command of the civil power, wherewith to enforce the acknowledgment of this creed by the most awful pains and penalties. The

primitive zeal for genuine moral and spiritual improvement was equally destroyed, by means of the corrupt and superstitious ideas of practical religion which had now grown into repute. Forms, ceremonies, mummeries, without end, were considered to be the proper and only necessary methods of Christian devotion. Morality and piety were almost utterly divorced from one another. To repeat many prayers, to confess often to a priest, to enrich the Church with costly gifts and offerings, were regarded as better evidences of a truly religious character, than to love the brotherhood, to forgive enemies, to follow after holiness, and to walk humbly with God. "Christianity was overlaid, and almost overwhelmed, by cumbersome ceremonies. Childish pomps, borrowed from Judaism and Heathenism, obscured its simple majesty and its sublime spiritual purposes." It is here, again, not meant to be denied that, amidst all this superstition, there was much cultivation of the true spiritual fruits of the Gospel, in the hearts and lives of many humble believers;—neither are we ignorant that, in the midst of all this darkness, there were occasional and partial efforts of the human intellect to deliver itself from the trammels of speculative error. But the general condition of the Church, throughout this long period, was as we have attempted to describe.

Such a profound slumber of the human mind, however, could not continue for ever. It is unnecessary here to attempt to trace the various causes which led to that great and happy state of the Christian world, which we term the Protestant Reformation. This has been done with much ability by several modern historians, particularly by Mr. Hallam. It is sufficient for us to observe, that this event constitutes the commencement of an entirely new period in the internal history of the Church. The stagnant waters were now once more put in motion; and from the beginning of the fifteenth century to the present time, the billows of theological contention have risen higher and higher, and rolled on in rapid succession, throughout every kingdom of Christendom to which the influence of the Reformation has reached. It is not a little remarkable, that this fourth era greatly resembles in character that which we have termed the second era,—as being an age chiefly distinguished by doctrinal speculation

and controversy. Even the modification of the spirit of this era, within itself considered, resembles that of the second,—only that the changes have been exactly in the reverse order. But we find that our space will not allow us to enter, as we should wish to do, into the discussion of this interesting period, and of the far better state of the Church of Christ, even a return to the spirit of the primitive times, by which we hope and trust that the present era is to be followed. We must therefore reserve the consideration of these topics for another opportunity. The intelligent reader will judge for himself of the accuracy of our statements hitherto, and make such additions or corrections as his own knowledge and judgment may suggest.

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### FLOWERS.

CHILDREN of dew and sunshine, balmy flowers !

Ye seem like creatures of a heavenly mold  
That linger in this fallen earth of ours,  
Fair relics of her Paradise of old.

Yes ; there is heaven about you : in your breath  
And hues it dwells. The stars of earth ye shine ;  
Bright strangers in a land of sin and death,  
That talk of God, and point to realms divine.

O mutely eloquent ! the heart may read  
In books like you, in tinted leaf or wing,  
Fragrance, and music, lessons that exceed  
The formal lore that graver pages bring.

Ye speak of frail humanity : ye tell  
How man, like you, shall flourish and shall fall.  
But, ah ! ye speak of Heavenly Love as well,  
And say, the God of flowers is God of all.

While Faith in you her Maker's goodness views  
Beyond her utmost need, her boldest claim,  
She catches something of your smiles and hues,  
Forgets her fears, and glows and smiles the same.

Childhood and you are playmates; matching well  
Your sunny cheeks, and mingling fragrant breath.  
Ye help young Love his faltering tale to tell;  
Ye scatter sweetness o'er the bed of Death.

Sweet flowers, sweet flowers, be mine to dwell with you!  
Ye talk of song and sunshine, hope and love:  
Ye breathe of all bright things, and lead us through  
The best of earth to better still above.

Sweet flowers, sweet flowers! the rich exuberance  
Of nature's heart in her propitious hours:  
When glad emotions in her bosom dance,  
She vents her happiness in laughing flowers.

I love your gentle eyes and smiling faces,  
Bright with the sun, or wet with balmy showers;  
Your looks and language in all times and places,  
In lordly gardens, or in woodland bowers.

But most, sweet flowers, I love you, when ye talk  
As Jesus taught you when He o'er you trod;  
And, mingling smiles and morals, bid us walk  
Content o'er earth to glory and to God.

LYTE.

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#### FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE RESURRECTION.

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As we approach revelation there is no antecedent improbability of a resurrection in our way. Nature, to speak in qualified language, has many signs and indications of such an event: the dispensations of Providence appear the most harmonious and beneficent when they issue in it.

Now, we learn from a volume avowedly containing express revelations from heaven, that God did raise the dead. We pass by the translation of Enoch and Elijah, not because they were other than extraordinary and astonishing occurrences, but because they were not made the basis, or the proof, of any particular doctrine, and come at once to the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He appeared among the Jews as a divine Teacher, and however private his early life may have been, his ministerial life was suffi-

ciently public. To his intimate friends he foretold his death by violence, and more obscurely, his release from the prison of the tomb. The eyes of thousands were upon him—of those who loved and those who hated him, and they witnessed the fulfilment of the first part of his prediction ; they saw him led forth to slaughter, and heard his dying sigh. After he had lain in the sepulchre he appeared again to the small band of his followers and friends, and on other occasions to greater numbers, to whom he bade a final farewell when the cloud received him out of their sight. The Apostles and Evangelists are the witnesses of these extraordinary occurrences. They gave their testimony on the scene of action, and in the presence of the enemies who put their Master to death ; they gave the same testimony where danger also threatened them, where afflictions befell them, where a violent death awaited them. They laid down their life on the altar of truth ; nor must it be forgotten, that the sacrifice was made not for opinions but for facts. The first and noblest martyrs died because they could not but speak of those things which they had seen and heard.

The evidence thus set forth and solemnly attested, has been received by thousands and tens of thousands with the full assent of the understanding. By many of this number it has been thoroughly sifted, and the result has sealed the veracity of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. The investigation has been pursued to their own full satisfaction, by men whose powers of intellect could grapple with the profoundest subjects of thought, and although great names add but little to the authority of a doctrine, yet must it be acknowledged that the evidence which a Newton, a Locke, a Newcome, and a Lardner have pronounced decisive, is not lightly to be rejected. Others, too, opponents of Christianity, and in search of arguments to refute the testimony of the Apostles, have yielded to the irresistible force of truth, and professed a faith which they zealously sought to impugn.

Were then the Apostles the willing dupes of an impostor ? Did they seal a falsehood with their blood ? Has the Christian world indulged to the pleasing delusion of a dream ? and have men of the first order of intellect decided without knowledge ? Is it incredible that Jesus

was raised from the dead? One word in answer—No. It requires a greater stretch of faith to believe all this possible than to admit the fact. But mark how much depends upon it! It is not an isolated fact, but one of a series of proofs in favour of the doctrine of a general resurrection—the highest—the most complete—the most convincing; one which our beneficent Father has adapted in the fullest manner to our understandings and feelings, and given as the sanction of our purest desires and fondest hopes.

On several occasions our Lord spake of his own deliverance from the dark prison of the grave, as a pledge on the part of our heavenly Parent that all mankind should experience the same deliverance. The declaration of his Apostles were to the same effect. The resurrection of their Master was associated in their mind with the general resurrection of their race; they saw in the one a glorious revelation and proof of the other, and the connexion was maintained and the proof adduced in all their writings and discourses. They could not separate the fact from the doctrine. If Christ were not risen, their faith was vain. Nor can they be separated from each other; they must stand or fall together. We cannot give a verdict in favor of the veracity of the sacred teachers and writers when they declare that Christ died and rose again from the dead, without yielding to the conviction that he was the first fruits of them that sleep; for he requires his followers to receive the interesting and solemn events which closed his earthly career, as a confirmation of the glorious hope they sincerely and ardently cherish, a demonstration of a future and endless life.

When under the light of revelation we are thus able to ascertain the final condition of man, the purest satisfaction and fullest confidence are the result. His destiny appears suitable to his powers and capacities; he appears to be formed and fitted for his destiny. The scenes of the present world brighten up, and he moves upon them a new being. If the business of the world does not afford him opportunities for the full cultivation and enlargement of his intellectual powers, and the time hastens onward when these shall become weak and at length dormant, he looks to a lovelier and more enduring scene for their full developement and exercise, where the aids of sense shall be

less needful to his progress, and mind, communicating with mind, exercise a sovereign sway. If the events of the world often diminish his little stock of happiness, and he sows in cares and sorrow but to reap disappointment, he darts a penetrating glance through the mists of eternity, and takes present comfort from the vision of a land where disappointment is never experienced, where the tear of sorrow is never shed.

And the doubts which must afflict the sincerely pious mind that watches the operations of providence as confined to the present world, quickly disappear, like a dark cloud from the face of the sun, when these operations are seen as they extend to the invisible world—to the final abode of man. Then the mind the most readily perceives the harmony of the Creator's designs, the heart is most sensible to the impressions of his goodness; difficulties respecting the existence of evil find a natural solution, and all the pains and afflictions incident to our condition are seen to issue in good. No more do we imagine that our heavenly Parent neglects us in any moment of time, much less casts us off for ever; and if the severity of misfortune, or the keenness of pain and anguish, assails our confidence in the divine favor, an enlarged acquaintance with his plans, and a lively faith in the justice and mercy of his government, restore our composure and relume the flame of hope. Then the present life is seen in its true design and colour—a preparatory state—the infancy of the whole life of man—the scene on which his character is formed, his merit or demerit ascertained. Thus viewed, I know not what can increase the interest of life or reflect a greater splendour upon it. 'Tis much to be permitted the enjoyment of even the fugitive pleasures of the world, the limited improvement of our talents, the indulgence of our generous affections, the exercise of our virtues—what is it to regard these as the dawnings of an improvement and felicity which shall make continual approaches to their meridian grace and lustre? Thrice-glorious state! Thrice-noble destiny! Nothing higher, nothing more felicitous can be ours, than the privilege of being the sons of God, the image of his own eternity, the honored servants and ministers of his throne, and the perpetual recipients of the gifts his grace and love bestow!

W.

## DUTIES OF MINISTERS.

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[The following observations on the reciprocal duties of ministers and people have been sent to us by a valued Correspondent, extracted, *we believe*, from some foreign periodical. We insert them, because they seem to us to be sensible and good. ED.]

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SIR,—I have been, for some time past, so situated, that I have had an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with all the labors, perplexities, cares, and anxieties of the minister of the place where I reside; and as I am not one of his family, and mingle pretty freely with people of all classes in the town, I have also had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with all, or nearly all the complaints, which are made against him. I have thus been led to reflect much on the subject of these complaints. And it does appear to me, that, on scarcely any other subject, are people so unreasonable,—so apt to talk, and even act, without thought or reflection. If the matter were once brought fairly before them, would they not see much of the unreasonableness of this fault-finding? Would they not reflect more and complain less? Permit me then, Mr. Editor, to say a few words to your readers on this subject.

The expressions of dissatisfaction which we most commonly hear from congregations, relate either to their pastor's public services, or to his manner of discharging his visiting duty. I will now suppose myself addressing them directly on the former of these points.

1. With respect to pulpit performances, you complain that your minister is dull and uninteresting, brings forward nothing new,—preaches old sermons too often,—and when he does write new ones, it is the same thing repeated:—that his style of writing is too general,—or else too particular and pointed; that he preaches too much upon doctrines, or dares not venture beyond moral preaching,—or that his manner of delivery is not pleasant, &c. &c.

And here permit me to ask, kind reader, if you have ever seriously considered what it is to write a sermon, such as you yourself would be satisfied with—what it is you require of your minister? Let us consider the subject. Formerly the case was different with preachers from what

it is at present. Ministers and people were almost entirely Orthodox—and there was but one style of preaching required or expected. There was a certain set of subjects, each to be supported by a certain set of arguments, explained in a certain way, and enforced by a certain class of illustrations, motives, and sanctions. The only enquiry among the people was, is he orthodox? and that being settled in the affirmative, they sat quietly down, willing to take all for law and gospel, that might come from the lips of their preachers. They were indeed zealous in support of their own opinions; but not being opposed, there was no necessity for examining again and again the argument used in their support. And in a peculiar manner were they zealous of good works—in the cultivation of evangelical virtues. Their zeal sometimes carried them to extremities; and it was sometimes expected that preachers, when speaking upon the duties of religion, would charge home with earnestness and even with sharpness, upon the hearts and consciences of their hearers. On these subjects they were to speak as men having authority. You will readily perceive that it was much less difficult then than at present to satisfy hearers. The course of a preacher's duty for life seemed to be marked out;—and if he kept along in the regular orthodox course, every thing he said was well received; if not, he was a heretic and would not be heard at all. But the times are greatly altered. People are no longer willing to take their religion upon trust; all are examining, and inquiring, and judging for themselves. The scriptures are searched with care, and criticised with even too much boldness. The works and the providence of God are examined to find arguments and illustrations, and human reason is tasked to its utmost, in support of truth and in the refutation of error. It matters not at the present day, with the hearer, whether the preacher be *called* orthodox or heterodox,— for, in either case, his reputation and that of his performances will depend not on his party name and badge, but on the soundness of his arguments. Men are not disposed, now, to receive with awe and reverence whatever comes from the lips of the preacher; on the contrary, they are disposed to criticise,—to dispute his assertions, to doubt his positions. They assent only when

his arguments are convincing. Such is the state of things at present. What then is the minister's duty? He must be indefatigable in his studies, in order to go before the spirit of inquiry, which is abroad among his people, and is pressing upon him with irresistible force, that he may be able to guide, to modify, and restrain, as well as cherish and advance it. It must be his endeavour to furnish his hearers with some correct principles of judging in religious inquiries,---to furnish them with new arguments in support of truth, to set old arguments in a new and more striking point of view, and to enforce them with illustrations drawn from every department of knowledge.

Such is the high and arduous duty of a minister, who wishes to do his duty—who wishes to take the lead of, and become an assistant to his people in their enquiries for religious truth. And will you say it is a small matter, to prepare in *this* way for the weekly performance of the pulpit? Does it not require an almost unremitted application to the study of the sacred scriptures, as God's express revelation—a thorough acquaintance with the natural world, considered in all its varieties and wonders, as the scene of God's operations; a careful attention to, and close observation of the dealings of providence with men, as illustrative of the wisdom and goodness of God, and a deep insight into the secret windings of that most deceitful of all things, the human heart, in order that he may know how to adapt his instructions to the different states of mind of his hearers? And, I repeat it, is this a small matter, that you should so readily complain if he fail to satisfy every body on every occasion.

2. Again, suppose your minister is to preach upon the *duties* of religion. Here the case is changed. Those who were but lately zealous, earnest, and attentive inquirers after religious truth, as soon as you speak to them of the duties of religion,—the manner in which they themselves ought to think and speak and act, will very likely become cold and dead; and listen with inattention if not apathy. What then is the minister to do here? His object now is, not as in the other instance, by hard and unremitting study, deep thought, close observation, and constant reflection, to be able to guide and assist anxious minds in their enquiries. It is to arouse his hearers from a state of lethargy

—to awaken their attention to their own duties; not to explain to them duties which they do not understand, but to enforce and impress upon them those with which they are already well acquainted, to which their attention has already been called, time after time, without effect. He is to persuade men, who have listened with indifference, year after year, to similar persuasions. And I ask is this a small matter? Does he wish to urge upon the impenitent the motives and sanctions, which have influenced others? —No: he will say to himself to these they have already listened time and again, without being influenced by them. Will not his labor be great, will not his anxiety be great and soul-wearing? What shall he do? He has tasked his own powers of invention to their utmost, and they will produce nothing new. He has searched the natural and moral world, for new motives, and they are exhausted; what shall he do, what can he do, to arouse the apathy and indifference of his hearers? Will he not sit down in the discouragement of his soul, and exclaim “who is sufficient for these things?” And will you say that the preparation for the weekly performances of the pulpit is a small matter.

3. Again. Will you not bear in mind, that your minister is not writing for you alone—that *you are but one of a numerous and mixed audience?* Your minister is to address an audience, composed of a great variety of minds, —the highly pious, the zealous, the lukewarm, and indifferent, and the openly profligate, for such sometimes attend church. He is to address an audience, which comprises such as have made great advances in religious knowledge, of those who have just begun to enquire, of those who are yet completely ignorant. If he is desirous to do his duty, he will endeavour to give to each “a portion in due season.” Will it then be strange if he should not always adapt his instructions to an individual’s taste? He may speak upon subjects which to you appear perfectly familiar, while to others they may be new and striking. He may speak upon subjects above your comprehension, while to others, who have made greater advances than yourself, they may be instructive. Will you then call it a small matter to prepare for the weekly performances of the pulpit, in such a manner as to meet, as far as possible,

the wants of all? You would not wish him to neglect every class of hearers but that into which you happen to fall.

4. Still further, you must bear in mind, that we possess the treasure of the gospel in earthen vessels—that ministers are but men, like ourselves, of like passions, frailties, and infirmities with us. Their health may at times be precarious, and they may be compelled to prepare for the sabbath when they should be in the care of the physician. They may be compelled to prepare for the pulpit, when from affliction and distress, their minds are unfitted for calm reflection. Again then I would ask, is all this a small matter? Surely, you will not deny that your minister *may* fail in his attempts, and yet be no proper subject of your reproaches.

5. But I will not leave the matter here, I will put another question to you. *Have not you yourselves a duty to perform*, to make the services of the pulpit more interesting than you now perhaps find them?

I have observed that the interest which persons take in what is addressed to them on *any* subject, depends far less upon the speaker, than upon the interest which the hearer takes in the subject on which he speaks. Is one interested in the subject of Astronomy, of French literature, or of Natural Philosophy; then will he listen attentively to those who speak upon these subjects. Is it not then your duty to endeavour by reading and reflection to become as deeply interested as possible in the whole subject of religion, to endeavour to attend upon the services of the sanctuary with proper views and feelings. Are we not, all of us, in the habit of attending church, in *too passive a frame of mind*? would not the services become more interesting, if our own hearts and minds were more deeply and attentively engaged? Let us consider the case a little further. There is no such thing as religion separate from religious beings—and a truly religious being is one, every act of whose life forms a part of religion. There is no such thing as a sabbath day religion, that may be put off when we please, and assumed again at pleasure, nor is there any such thing as a religion which we can obtain from our minister. If we are religious at all, it must be a concern entirely our own, a matter between our Maker and ourselves, between ourselves and our fellow men, be-

tween our conduct and our consciences. If we are truly religious we shall be earnestly desirous of becoming better and better, we shall be struggling, during the *whole week* in *all* our actions, in *all our intercourse* with our fellow-men, to become more and more perfect. Is it not then, a wise provision, that one day in seven should be set apart for more calm reflection, more earnest and close examination, more humble and fervent prayer, and that an order of men should be appointed to assist us in our inquiries after truth and duty? And is it not our duty and interest to attend upon the services of the sanctuary with such dispositions as shall prepare us to profit by our attendance? To a well disciplined mind, religious topics however presented, are interesting, and it is not possible to deprive such a mind of all benefit from the preached word. But if we make religion a business, separate from our daily occupations, if we are daily devoted to wordly pursuits and pleasures, wholly thoughtless and indifferent upon the subject of duty, that is, of the religious character of our own conduct, in six days, can we expect to be interested on the seventh in the words of the gospel? And still further, are we not apt to look upon attendance at church as an *end*, rather than as a *means*, as religion itself, rather than as one of the means of promoting religion in our own hearts and lives; are we not too apt to think, or at least to act, as though we thought, when we had waited upon the Lord in his courts our duty was performed? Are we not too apt to go away and make our remarks upon the manner of the performances, rather than to endeavour to apply what has been said to our own case? And can we expect that the services of the sanctuary will be interesting, while we are in this state of mind? It has been said that "a peasant in England was in the habit of attending very constantly upon the preaching of a methodist divine in the neighbourhood. This was observed by a young nobleman whose mansion he passed. As he was once passing, the nobleman inquired of him, 'Well, Tom, you have been to church, and I suppose it is all done now?' 'No,' he replied, 'it is all said, and I am going home to pray that it *may be all done.*'" If hearers would take this course, instead of criticising and complaining of the performances of the

preacher, we should see evidence of more real religion, and should hear fewer complaints of dull, uninteresting sermons. And now, my kind reader, I beg of you to put the question to your own conscience—have you not complained thoughtlessly of your preacher? Have you not many times, complained when the fault was your own? If so, it is time to amend in this matter. Justice to him, and to yourself, alike demands it. And not less is it due to him, who has seen fit to employ the ministry of the gospel, as the means by which truth and virtue are to be preserved and advanced.

J. W.

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## POPULAR EDUCATION.

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[We have for some days been chiefly engaged in perusing Mr. Wyse's long-expected book on "Education Reform."\* It was our full intention to give something like a general analysis and review of the work for the readers of the *Gospel Advocate*; but from this attempt we are now deterred by the vast extent and variety of the author's disquisitions. We could give no just idea of the nature of the work, by any summary or dissection of it which could be comprised in our limited space. It consists of 553 closely printed large octavo pages, crowded with notes; and the subjects discussed embrace almost every thing relating to the natural faculties, or the physical, intellectual, and moral cultivation of man. It is evident that Mr. Wyse is himself a gentleman of the most thorough education, with a very refined mind, an enlarged and benevolent spirit, and stores of knowledge which he has gathered from a very extensive course of reading in all languages. We have no hesitation in saying that the principal, if not the only defect of the work, in regard to its main, ostensible object, (the reform of popular education,) consists in its excellence regarded as a philosophical treatise on education in general. There should clearly

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\* "Education Reform ; or, the Necessity of a National System of Education. By THOMAS WYSE, Esq., M.P. London : Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, Paternoster Row. 1836."

have been two separate works,---one a simple and concise delineation of the author's enlightened views concerning the education of the people,---the other containing his interesting and thoughtful speculations, oftentimes so eloquently expressed, on human improvement and happiness. But as it is, we have seldom read a book from which we seem to ourselves to have derived a greater degree of pleasure and of profit. Mr. Wyse had already earned the respect and gratitude of the nation, by his quiet, modest, but persevering and valuable labours, as a member of Parliament, in the all important cause of popular education. He has here presented the English public with a work which must surely produce a deep impression on all who peruse it with the attention it so truly deserves. It should be studied by all who have the opportunity, and who feel a strong interest in the education of their own minds, of their children, or of their countrymen. We give two extracts, relating to different subjects, persuaded that our pages cannot be better occupied.---ED.]

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The first will afford some idea of the author's clear and comprehensive views of the business of education.

"Good Education, being a preparation for social life, necessarily embraces the whole man,—body, head, and heart, for in social life, the whole man is necessarily "mis à contribution," in one way or other, almost every hour. But this is not sufficient. There must be no preponderance, as well as no exclusion: a limited, or biased Education, produces monsters. Some are satisfied with the cultivation of a single faculty,—some, with the partial cultivation of each. A child is trained up to working;—he is hammered into a hardy labourer,—a stout material for the physical bone and muscle of the state. This is good, so far as it goes; but it is bad because it goes no farther. He is not taught reading,—he is not taught religion—above all, he is not taught thinking. He never looks into his other self;—he soon forgets its existence, "vivit, et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ:" the man becomes all body,—his intellectual and moral being lies fallow. The growth of such a system will be, a sturdy race of machines—delves, and soldiers; but not men: so much

brute physical energy swinging loosely through society, at the discretion of those more spiritual natures, to whom their Education, neglected, or perverted in another way, gives wickedness with power, and teaches the secrets of mind, only as an instrument, to crush or play men for their own selfish purposes.

"Others educate the intellectual and moral being only; the physical, once the building is raised, like an idle scaffolding, is cast by. But the omission is injurious—often fatal: malady is laid up, in all its thousand forms, in the infant and the child. It spreads out upon the man. When his spirit is in the flush of its strength, and his moral rivals his intellectual nature in compass and in power, then it is that this despised portion of his being rises up and avenges itself for this contempt. The studious man feels, as he walks down life, a thousand minute retaliations for this prodigal waste of his youthful vigour. The body bows down beneath the burden of the mind,---it wears gradually away into weakness and incompetency; ---clouds of sickness, pangs of pains, obscure, distort, weigh it to the earth. Health is not of organisation only, but of training;---it is to be laid up bit by bit. We are to be *made* healthy---tutored and practised into health. Omit it in favour of the intellectual and moral faculties, and you provide instruments, it is true, for mind, but instruments, which when wanted, cannot be used. Intellectual and Moral Education may rank before Physical, but they are not more essential: the physical powers are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, for the spiritual. The base of the column is in the earth; but without it, neither could the shaft stand firm above it, nor the capital ascend to the sky.

"The education which confines to the desk or chapel is a very partial education; it is only a chapter in the system. It is pernicious—it is a portion only of the blessing of education. If such be the result of separating physical and intellectual education—how much more so of dividing intellectual and moral! It is laboriously providing, for the community, dangers and crimes. It entrusts power, with the perfect certainty of its being abused. It brings into the very heart of our social existence the two hostile principles of Manicheism; it sets up the glory and beauty

of civilisation, to be dashed to pieces by the "evil spirit," to whom it gives authority over it. It disciplines the bad passions of our nature against the good, making men wicked by rule,---rendering vice system,---intrusting to the clever head the strong hand, and setting both loose by the impulse of the bad heart below. The omission of Physical Education renders the other two ineffective or precarious; but the neglect of Moral Education converts physical and intellectual into positive evils. The pestilence of a high-taught, but corrupt, mind, "blowing where it listeth," seathes and sears the souls of men,—it is felt for miles and years almost interminable. By the press (the steam of the intellectual world) it touches distant ages and other hemispheres. It corrupts the species in mass. It is not only in the actual generation, but in the rickety offspring which follow late and long, that its deep-eating poison—its Mephistopheles breath---is strongly detected. Late ages wonder at the waste of great means, at the perversion of high opportunities, and noble powers, at the dereliction of solemn duties, which every where characterise these strong, but evil beings. Call them conquerors---call them philosophers---call them patriots---put on what golden seeming you may,---when the mask falls off, as it always does, in due season, we see behind it the worst combination which can disgust or afflict humanity. Such men---deliverers and enlighteners (as their sycophants hail them) ---such men are the true master-workers of the vices and calamities of their age and country. But who made them? They who taught them. Education left out its very essence. It gave them knowledge, but it left them immorality.

"But is Moral Education possible, without Intellectual? There are those who think they can, and ought to separate them. But they judge erroneously, and thank God, attempt impossibilities. Half of our being cannot thus be torn from the other. They are intertwined: it is difficult to say, where one begins, the other ends. The two great movers of our moral nature, are Sentiment and Reason. Sentiment is the aboriginal instinct of our being---that which, for a long period, preludes to, and supplies the place of, Reason, and, in its wonderful developements of sympathy and imitation, directs more rapidly and truly

to the degree of intellectual and moral culture for which it was intended, than even reason itself. It is the living flame, by which we measure the proportion of life which is within us. With Sentiment, all morality, all religion should commence. Hence no child is too young for the first feelings of either. The Author of all good, and of all love, is already made known to the infant, in the smiles and caresses of its parents. But something more than this is required ; and Providence has been equally wise and beneficent in providing it. Reason is the regulator of this impulse. Providence offers us its aid, precisely at a period, when it is demanded. Morality must confirm its impulses by its convictions. It must judge as well as feel. An act of sound judgment is often a virtue, ---if not a virtue, at least, the creator of many. Most of the passions settle into vices, principally from the weakness or torpor of the intellect. A conscience, indeed, is set up ; but so completely under the guidance of its numerous assessors,---prejudices, illusions, fears, and other children of ignorance,---that its decisions cannot for an instant be relied on. The decree of one day is reversed the next : it is dragged to and fro by contending beliefs and opinions ; it is the mere creature of chance and impulse. How has all this vacillation and incoherence been produced ? By the insufficiency, or the vagueness, of the materials which go to make up its judgments. The senses have been uneducated---the perceptions uneducated : the attention has been uneducated ; reason and judgment are therefore blind and random. The intellect, in a word, has lain dormant. Religion---Piety is not the child of the affections only, but of the affections and of the reason combined. The wise king asked for *understanding*, above all treasures. To him, it was morality, virtue, religion. He was right, ---without it, morality is mere passion---virtue is an accident, or a name,---religion gropes blindly into fanaticism, or floats off from disappointment into incredulity. A faith which is merely the echo of an echo---which is thought, but not believed, which is custom, but not conviction---rests passively, but not firmly, in the mind of the professor. It is not thrown off, neither is it kept. It remains there, if no storm threaten ; but the first blast which disturbs, destroys. No one would trust the charac-

ter of a child to the decision of such chances; much less the character of a community. How much wiser to build upon the base which God has given ; to build upon that which may sustain, and in the order in which the removal of no one stone may endanger the entire structure. That base is Intellectual Education.

When I speak of Moral Education, I imply religion ; and when I speak of religion, I speak of Christianity. It is morality, it is conscience, *par excellence*. Even in the most worldly sense, it could easily be shown, that no other morality so truly binds, no other education so effectually secures even the coarse and material interests of society. The economist himself, would find his gain in such a system. Even if it did not exist, he should invent it. It works his most sanguine speculations of good into far surer and more rapid conclusions, than any system he could attempt to set up in its place. No system of philosophy has better consulted the mechanism of society, or jointed it together with a closer adaptation of all its parts, than Christianity. No legislator who is truly wise---no Christian ---will for a moment think---for the interests of society and religion,---which, indeed, are one,---of separating Christianity from Moral Education. It would be quite as absurd, as to separate Moral Education from Intellectual. But this is very different from sectarianism. National protection, accorded to the schools of particular churches---when the *whole* nation requires it---is a tacit rebuke and discouragement to *all others*. It is prohibition and monopoly, ---not Christianity, but anti-Christianity."

In the following passage Mr. Wyse speaks of the Church in the spirit of a true Reformer.

"Another feature of the times, it is alleged, is hostility to the Established Church. By many this hostility is attributed to Education. It is argued, that when there was *no education* there was *no hostility*; ergo, &c. &c. But is this a calumny on the Church, or on Education ?

"What religion is that which fears knowledge? It affects to be built on truth, and it shrinks from inquiry. Such an institution bears in itself the consciousness of a fraud. A fraud cannot be divine---such religion is not Christian-

To this dilemma are these Christian champions reduced, who would build up their authority on popular ignorance!

" But, of all religions, Protestantism has least reason to complain : her very name testifies against her. Her creed is *opposition*, not *authority*. Her strength, if you believe herself, arose from the sudden enlightenment of Europe ; her salvation, if you now believe her, depends on stopping short in the midst of it. The Church, in passing from resistance to enjoyment, has forgotten the pledges and professions of her youth. She places herself in a false position, every way, by such conduct. She protestantises to the Catholic, and catholicises to the Dissenter. If she be still Protestant,—if she be still for free judgment,—let her instruct, in every way, the people in order to enable and to qualify them to exercise it. If she be for authority, let her not scoff at the Catholic for maintaining the very same doctrine, with this difference, that the Catholic is at least consistent. He retains the dogma of his forefathers ; whilst the Protestant denies the very principle by which his faith was established, by which it claims the title of a reform, and not of a revolt.

" But the real fact is, that the hostility is not directed against *Protestantism*, but against *Churchism* ; not against the spiritual dogma, but the temporal power. Such a temper as hers is favourable to the diffusion of knowledge : and, under other circumstances, perhaps, the Church of England, so far from apprehending its advances, would have been the first to have stood forth for its universal propagation. But the faith and the establishment are not to be confounded ; the Church *professing* may be favourable, but the Church *enjoying* is not : or, to speak more truly it is not the Church, but the Aristocracy *through* the Church, who affect to see, in the protesting of the Dissenters against abuses, the extinction of all Protestantism ; and in popular instruction, the overturning of all moral order, the only true assurance for permanent civilisation.

" Hence, while comparatively little solicitude is shown for this or that article of belief, a most tremulous anxiety is evinced for every shilling with which, more or less, the external profession is connected. A more signal instance of a complete wheel round from the Reformation to the Church which it professed to reform, cannot be conceived.

Inviolability of Church property in the mouth of a Catholic is at least intelligible; in that of a Protestant, it is a self-condemnation. If Church property be inviolable what must we think of the Reformation? if Church property be not inviolable, what must we think of the Establishment? When did this inviolability *begin*? when is it right it should *cease*? If by inviolable is meant what under *no* circumstances should be touched, we come at once to the position that, on one side, the present Church of England is a sacrilegious usurper; and, on the other, that if, by any new change, the country should secede from the Church, and leave, as was the case in more than one instance, the court of one religion, and the nation of another, it would still be right, it would still be an imperative duty, an act of justice and piety, to leave the court in the enjoyment of the old establishment, and to throw the burden of the new religion, the church of its choice, upon the nation. This is a strong case; but, to judge by late events, not altogether an impossible one. The sects which now press round the Established Church are what the Established Church *once was*: they fight her with her *own* tactics; they are not yet enervated by the Capuan indulgencies of wealth and power; they are seasoned soldiers, in array against one who has long ceased to be a soldier at all. The Church may yet awake, and find herself, as in Scotland and Ireland, a staff without army, a shepherd without a flock. Were such a catastrophe to ensue, surely the boldest of her champions would not continue to maintain these preposterous pretensions. If not, exceptions are already established: the only further question to determine is, at what *specific* point such exceptions commence. At what proportion of professors to population, of duty to salary, does curtailment become legitimate, and this "inviolable" property become violable? What was sacrilege yesterday, at what hour to-day does it become religion?

"But the really material question is, not so much the motive or justice of the quarrel, as how the quarrel having already occurred, may be best and most speedily adjusted. Once commenced, it will not of *itself* subside. Such is not the course with the public questions of the nineteenth century. Is ignorance, in such an emergency, a natural or safe ally? Will it *subdue*, what it could not *prevent*?

Because it was the blind defender of Church rights and Church revenues yesterday, is that any reason why it should not attack both Church rights and Church revenues as blindly to-morrow? The Independents and Anabaptists of the Reformation were not, as masses, better instructed than the popular masses of the present day. Their ignorance was no protection, even to their fellow-Protestants. The same reasoning holds good at present. It is not the most educated amongst the Dissenters who are the most violent. The Unitarians are as fond of tranquillity as the Church herself. The quieting effect of instruction is scarcely less than that of wealth. Ignorance, on the contrary, like poverty, is never certain in its effects. To-day, it produces the most abject submission; to-morrow, a rebellion, and perhaps a revolution.

"The Church and the People have a long balance to settle. Her talent has not been doubled; her stewardship has not been faithful. Happy had it been for her, that "her mitred front" had been less seen in courts, and her ways been more by the bedside of the dying, in the dungeon of the captive. She has ceased to be the *People's church*, in becoming too much the church of the *Aristocracy*. The People could not starve, and they have chosen pastors elsewhere; they were not fed, and they will not pay. A deep retributive feeling has been long lurking at the bottom of the national heart. It has now found its way. It is not in the voice of John Knox, or John Calvin, that it speaks,—a milder spirit is more consonant to the present age, but its power is not less prevailing: neither ecclesiastical manifestoes, nor changing ministers, nor partisan magistrates, though they may delay, can stay it. To deny that the growth of knowledge and intelligence, that inquiry and discussion, have given it greater extension and force, would be to deny the intrinsic powers of mind and truth; but to suppose that to check one will check the other, is to betray a total ignorance both of cause and effect. Church Reform has begun: it began the very day that Parliamentary Reform was passed. It arose out of acknowledged abuses, deep-felt grievances, and the increased power of public opinion, and the determined will of the people to give that power effect. To avert its march, popular ignorance, restrictions on knowledge, are insufficient. The Church, if she be corrupt, should correct

herself before correction comes up from below. If she be pure, why should she fear correction. To what does she owe, on her own exulting assertion, the successes of the Reformation? Let her fulfil the great behest of the Gospel of Light, by illuminating all men who come into this world, and trust for its consequences to the Divine Teacher who healed the blind, and willed that his name and works should be known to all nations and generations. Let her shepherds "feed their flocks," and not "themselves" unlike "the shepherds of Israel;" and, in the day of visitation, "the sword of the Lord will pass them by." In a word, let her, on one side, in a large and unsectarian spirit, throw open the doors of knowledge to every class and persuasion, however opposed to her; and on the other, lower that weight of wealth, those earthly incumbrances of pomp and power, by which she is impeded at present in all her moral and religious functions. So may she pray *consistently* that the kingdom of *heaven* may come. So may she meet inquiry, and not *fear* it. If truth be with her, Education, thus treated, will be her friend, and not her foe; instead of "the staff of reed," which, "when she leaneth on it, breaks beneath her," she will find it a sword of the spirit of God, a buckler of defence. This may rescue her from the shadow of death which compasses her round; nothing less can. The rich "establishments" of papal Spain and Portugal have crumbled; and does the far more gorgeous Establishment of Protestant England, with these wrecks around her, hope for immortality?"

## UNION OF CHURCHES.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

SIR,—The proposer of the plan for a Union of Churches among liberal dissenters which you had the goodness to insert in your number for March, perceiving by the subsequent communication from your intelligent correspondent S., that his design has been misapprehended in one or two particulars, begs your permission to add a few further remarks by way of explanation.

The *third* proposed principle was by no means intended, as S. supposes, to require a "*uniformity in the mode of public worship,*" and indeed I was not aware that it was liable to such a construction. All at which I aimed was a

recognition of the expediency or utility of avoiding, as far as may be, in public worship, the insisting on those obscure and disputable topics which have ever been found to occasion division and strife in the Christian Church, and inculcating principally those generally admitted doctrines of the New Testament which may be considered as constituting *Catholic Christianity*. I suggested merely the utility of recognizing this as a *general principle*, leaving it perfectly open to every Church, and to every individual, to make the application of it to every particular subject agreeably to the dictates of his own judgment, and expressly reserving to every one the right of freely stating his private opinions on every point, whenever occasion should make it convenient for him so to do. With this explanation, I trust your correspondent, whether or not he shall deem the adoption of the proposed principle expedient, will at least be convinced that it is not calculated in any degree "to detract from that perfect liberty possessed by dissenting churches." I beg to remind him that it was not proposed as a *rule* by which any one's conduct was to be prescribed and judged, but merely as a principle, whose truth it was desirable to recognize. This distinction is not I conceive either obscure or unimportant. It is one which we may observe to be taken in the return of our political representatives. To prescribe to a candidate for Parliament a specific pledge respecting his future conduct is, I think, justly deemed an infringement on that freedom and discretion which the senator ought to enjoy: but to expect from him a declaration of his existing views and principles, is not only what is universally done without censure, but a precaution without which the choosing a representative would seem no better than a mockery.

It is evident that all unions of men must of necessity be based on their entertaining some common principles, and pursuing some common objects. In religious sects, the bond of union is commonly found not only in the recognition of the Christian faith in general, or in that of the authority of the Scriptures, but in the approval of some specific creed in reference to points on which the doctrines of the Scriptures have been found liable to dispute. That, then, is one principle of union, namely to require conformity of opinion on the disputed doctrines: but if

this method be abandoned and opinion left free, one of two things will seem to follow. Either the church must leave the gate open for as much controversy and contention as the zeal of individuals for their particular opinions may tend to produce, or it must adopt the plan of avoiding the debateable topics, and conducting its public ministrations, as far as possible, consistently with the proper freedom of individuals and the interests of truth, on common and undisputed ground. Now with us, I think, there is not much difference of opinion on the propriety of avoiding in general the discussion of controversial subjects in the pulpit: the only question, therefore, is whether it be or be not desirable to embody this prevailing sentiment as an express principle of the proposed union. I own, that considering the latitude of opinion which the Union avowedly proposes to tolerate, it appears to me very suitable at least, if not almost necessary, that its principles should contain something tending to check the effusion of such controversial or dogmatical matter as would tend to offence and schism. It appears of great importance that our societies should be so constituted, that persons of liberal sentiments, not theologians, but frequenting public worship on account of its great practical ends, should be able to attend our chapels without feeling themselves at all committed to any of those sectarian dogmas of any kind which in fact belong rather to the follies of past ages, and to which the intelligent and active spirits of the present day attach a continually diminishing regard. Our *disclaimer* of all such dogmatism ought, I conceive, to be so positive and decisive, that those who attend our assemblies may have no reason to consider themselves as professing *Unitarianism* by so doing, nor any other *ism*, but rather as merging all narrower distinctions in the common name and duties of Christians.

Having offered this explanation of what has been deemed objectionable in the proposed principle, I had intended to have noticed the amendments suggested by S. in the detail of the rules in some of which I concur, but now forbear to do so, from a feeling that such minuter points may be better disposed of, if an occasion should arise, in personal discussion.

F.

*“A Letter to the Inhabitants of Bath, on Church Establishments, and Church Rates; in Reply to the Speeches of the Venerable Archdeacon Moysey, D.D., Sir W. S. R. Cockburn, Bart., and the Rev. E. Tottenham, M.A., at a Meeting in the Assembly-Rooms, Feb. 14, 1837. By JEROM MURCH, Minister of Trim-Street Chapel. Second Edition.* Bath: Printed by J. and J. Keene, No. 7, Kingsmead-Street. London: Smallfield and Son, and J. Green; Bristol: J. Philp; and to be had of all Booksellers.”

The Church Rate question has given rise to almost as many pamphlets as meetings, throughout the country. This “Letter” by Mr. Murch is judicious and spirited. Its local usefulness, we have no doubt, must have been very great, and it is still well worthy of perusal by all who wish to see the fallacies, which the blinder portion of the clergy are every where putting forth on this subject, thoroughly exposed :—

*“It will be impossible to do more than touch upon a few points, and I begin by saying, that I do not find a single prohibition in scripture against establishments, or the interference of the civil magistrate, in providing for and protecting the worship of God.”*

“I assent to this proposition, because it does not appear to involve the questions of creed-making, and forced obedience; but even with these limitations I object to Mr. Tottenham’s inference. He must be aware that there is no prohibition in the Scriptures against many things which, notwithstanding, we all believe to be unchristian:—the general spirit of the Word of God, rather than any express command, being our guide in such cases. But then, he says, St. John, and St. Paul, and St. Peter positively foretold many evils—apostacies, heresies, false teachers—which the Christian world has been afflicted with; and if the Church of England had been so injurious as it is represented to be, surely they would have warned the world against that also. Now does not Mr. Tottenham know that those prophesies which he interprets as applying exclusively to the Church of Rome, the Dissenter interprets as applying with equal force to the Church of England? He proceeds, however, to contend that the fact of there being no prohibition in the New Testament is important, because an establishment, sanctioned by the Divine Being, existed in connection with the Jewish dispensation. This proves, he says, that there can be nothing in the principle of an establishment distasteful to God. Why, by adopting this mode of reasoning, we may reconcile ourselves to almost any thing. For example, the divine right of Kings was sanctioned by the Deity under the Jewish dispensation; and there is no express command against the recognition of it in the new; consequently, according to Mr. Tottenham’s reasoning, there can be nothing in the principle of

the divine right of Kings distasteful to God; every despot may govern as he pleases, and declare that his authority is from heaven. If it be said that only those Kings who were especially appointed by God can be regarded as having had His sanction, then I say that only that establishment which was expressly instituted by God can be regarded as of heavenly origin. The history of the Jews is full of proofs that the union of Church and State in their times was a necessary, yet merely a temporary evil, from the time when Aaron, with the sound of God's trumpets ringing in his ears, called for the golden ornaments of the people that he might make a false god, to the time when the High Priests, *with the consciousness of being backed by the law*, clamoured for the crucifixion of our blessed Lord. During the whole of this period, there are proofs, which accumulate, at last, with terrible rapidity, that the union in question could not have been intended to last longer than the Jewish dispensation. But Mr. Tottenham quotes Scripture to shew that the Apostles understood the matter in a different light. "St. Paul," he says "likens the two dispensations in this very point; for when speaking of the provision which should be made for the advancement of religion, he says to the Corinthians, 'Say I these things as a man; or saith not the law the same also?'" Now this is one of those apparently ingenious, but exceedingly deceptive arguments which the reverend gentleman so often introduces; and which called forth, first, the applauses of his hearers, and afterwards the editorial remark, that no one could differ from him "without denying Scripture, or running into the wildest absurdities." Fellow-Citizens, let us see how the case stands in this instance. You will find, on referring to the passage, that the provision for the advancement of religion, adverted to by the Apostle, was a *voluntary* provision. St. Paul was shewing (what all Dissenters most cordially believe) that those who spend their time in preaching the Gospel, should receive a subsistence from those who profit by their services. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?—who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?—or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?" Now Mr. Tottenham's hearers probably supposed that the portion of the law to which St. Paul referred, was one of those which enjoin the payment of tithes, and other fixed sums. But how does the Apostle continue his remarks?—"For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Well, now, turn to the chapter in Deuteronomy, from which the quotation is made—Do you meet with any thing about tithes or Church Rates, or any other means of supporting an Ecclesiastical Establishment? Not a word; there is not the most distant allusion to the subject. Moses was enjoining the duty of justice in secular matters between man and man. The injunction, not to "muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," (implying that, while working, the ox was to be permitted to eat what he pleased,) signifies that God extended this duty of justice to dumb animals. St. Paul, still referring to the Ministers of the Gospel and their hearers, calls upon the Corinthians, to profit by so striking an instance, "Does God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written: that he that ploweth should

plow in hope ; and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope." I put it to every candid mind, whether the Apostle in quoting the command about the ox, shewed us that, as the civil magistrate had provided for the worship of God under the old dispensation, he was therefore bound to make the same provision under the new ? And yet we are told that if we do not assent to this conclusion we " either deny Scripture, or run into the wildest absurdities !" I have thus examined the passage on which Mr. Tottenham appeared to lay the greatest stress, in order to convey an idea of the manner in which all his scriptural quotations might be disposed of."

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" *A Discourse delivered at the Dedication of the Unitarian Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island, July 27, 1836. By WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING. London : Printed and published by Richard Kinder, 21, Great New Street, Fetter Lane. Sold by J. Mardon, 7, Farringdon Street, and all Booksellers. 1837.*"

This new Sermon by Dr. Channing, besides the general excellencies which every reader already acquainted with his writings must expect to find in any such production of his pen, has likewise particular interest from the circumstance of its having been preached at the dedication of a Unitarian Church in the author's native island and town. After the discussion of his general subject,—" the gratitude and joy which arise from and constitute the pure, spiritual worship of God,"—Dr. Channing enters with great feeling upon some reflections of a local and personal nature, which the circumstances suggested. He furnishes us with some portion of auto-biography, of the most valuable kind because relating to the growth and experience of his gifted mind. We shall make an extract from each part of the discourse. The following striking remarks close the first part :

" I have now, my friends, set before you the worship to which this building is set apart, and which, from its rational, filial, pure, and ennobling character, renders this solemnity a season for thankfulness and joy. I should not, however, be just to this occasion, or to the great purpose of this house, if I were to stop here. My remarks have hitherto been confined to the worship which is to be offered within these walls ; to the influence to be exerted on you when assembled here. But has this house no higher end than to give an impulse to your minds for the very few hours which you are to spend beneath its roof ? Then we have little reason to enter it with joy. The great end for which you are to worship here is that you may worship everywhere. You are to feel God's presence here, that it may be felt wherever you go, and whatever you do. The very idea of spiritual homage is that it takes possession of the soul, and becomes a part of

our very being. The great design of this act of dedication is, that your houses, your places of business may be consecrated to God. This topic of omnipresent worship I cannot expand. One view of it, however, I must not omit. From the peculiar character of the worship to which this house is consecrated, you learn the *kind* of worship which you should carry from it into your common lives. It is not uncommon for the Christian teacher to say to his congregation, that when they leave the church, they go forth into a nobler temple than one made with hands,—into the temple of the creation; and that they must go forth to worship God in his works. The views given of the true worship in this Discourse, will lead me to a somewhat different style of exposition. I will, indeed, say to you, go from this house to adore God as he is revealed in the boundless universe. This is one end of your worship here. But I would add, that a higher end is, that you should go forth to worship him as he is revealed in his rational and moral offspring; and to worship him by fulfilling, as you have power, his purposes in regard to these. My great aim in this Discourse, has been to show that God is to be adored here as the Father of rational and moral beings; of yourselves and all mankind; and such a worship tends directly, and is designed to lead us, when we go hence, to recognize God in our own nature; to see in men his children; to respect and serve them for their relationship to the Divinity; to see in them signatures of greatness amidst all their imperfection; and love them with more than earthly love. We must not look round on the universe with awe, and on man with scorn; for man, who can comprehend the universe and its laws, "is greater than the universe, which cannot comprehend itself." God dwells in every human being more intimately than in the outward creation. The voice of God comes to us in the ocean, the thunder, the whirlwind; but how much more of God is there in his inward voice; in the intuitions of reason; in the rebukes of conscience; in the whispers of the Holy Spirit! I would have you see God in the awful mountain and the tranquil valley; but more, much more, in the clear judgment, the moral energy, the disinterested purpose, the pious gratitude, the immortal hope, of a good man. Go from this house to worship God, by reverencing the human soul as his chosen sanctuary. Revere it in yourselves, revere it in others, and labour to carry it forward to perfection. Worship God within these walls as universally, impartially, good to his human offspring; and go forth to breathe the same spirit. Go forth to respect the rights, and seek the true, enduring welfare of all within your influence. Carry with you the conviction, that to trample on a human being, of whatever colour, clime, rank, condition, is to trample on God's child; that to degrade or corrupt a man, is to deface a holier temple than any material sanctuary. Mercy, love, is more acceptable worship to God, than all sacrifices or outward offerings. The most celestial worship ever paid on earth was rendered by Christ when he approached man, and the most sinful man, as a child of God; when he toiled and bled to awaken what was divine in the human soul; to regenerate a fallen world. Be such the worship which you shall carry from this place. Go forth to do good with every power which God bestows; to make every place you enter

happier by your presence ; to espouse all human interests ; to throw your whole weight into the scale of human freedom and improvement ; to withstand all wrong ; to uphold all right ; and, especially, to give light, life, strength, to the immortal soul. He who rears up one child in Christian virtue, or recovers one fellow-creature to God, builds a temple more precious than Solomon's or St Peter's ; more enduring than earth or heaven."

In the following noble strain Dr. Channing speaks of the feelings created in his mind by the peculiar situation in which he was placed :—

" It is with no common emotion that I take part in the present solemnity. I stand now to teach where, in my childhood and youth, I was a learner. The generation which I then knew has almost wholly disappeared. The venerable man whose trembling voice I then heard in this place, has long since gone to his reward. My earliest friends, who watched over my childhood, and led me by the hand to the spot, have been taken. Still my emotions are not sad. I rejoice ; for whilst I see melancholy changes around me, and still more feel that time, which has bowed other frames, has touched my own, I see that the work of human improvement has gone on. I see that clearer and brighter truths, than were opened on my own youthful mind, are to be imparted to succeeding generations. Herein I do and will rejoice.

" On looking back to my early years, I can distinctly recollect unhappy influences exerted on my mind by the general tone of religion in this town. I can recollect, too, a corruption of morals among those of my own age, which made boyhood a critical, perilous season. Still I must bless God for the place of my nativity ; for, as my mind unfolded, I became more and more alive to the beautiful scenery which now attracts strangers to our island. My first liberty was used in roaming over the neighbouring fields and shores ; and amid this glorious nature, that love of liberty sprang up, which has gained strength within me to this hour. I early received impressions of the great and the beautiful, which I believe have had no small influence in determining my modes of thought and habits of life. In this town I pursued, for a time, my studies of theology. I had no professor or teacher to guide me ; but I had two noble places of study. One was yonder beautiful edifice, now so frequented and so useful as a public library,—then so deserted, that I spent day after day, and sometimes week after week, amidst its dusty volumes, without interruption from a single visitor. The other place was yonder beach, the roar of which has so often mingled with the worship of this place,—my daily resort,—dear to me in the sunshine, still more attractive in the storm. Seldom do I visit it now without thinking of the work, which there, in the sight of that beauty, in the sound of those waves, was carried on in my soul. No spot on earth has helped to form me so much as that beach. There I lifted up my voice in praise amidst the tempest. There, softened by beauty, I poured out my thanksgiving and contrite confessions. There, in reverential sympathy with the mighty power around me, I became conscious of power within,

There, struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth, as if moved to utterance by Nature's eloquence of the winds and waves. There began a happiness surpassing all worldly pleasures, all gifts of fortune,—the happiness of communing with the works of God. Pardon me this reference to myself. I believe that the worship, of which I have this day spoken, was aided in my own soul by the scenes in which my early life was passed. Amidst these scenes, and in speaking of this worship, allow me to thank God that this beautiful island was the place of my birth.

Towards the end of the Sermon, and in a note, are some particulars of the celebrated Dr. Hopkins, who, as many of our readers are aware, was the author of some peculiar modifications of Calvinism, and the head of a sect which for some time bore his name. Dr. Channing, who knew him personally, thus describes the character of his mind.

"I have thrown together these recollections of a man, who has been crowded out of mens' minds by the thronging events and interests of our time; but who must always fill an important place in our ecclesiastical history. He was a singularly blameless man, with the exception of intolerance towards those who differed from him. This he sometimes expressed in a manner, which, to those unacquainted with him, seemed a sign of any thing but benignity. In one point of view I take pleasure in thinking of him. He was an illustration of the power of our spiritual nature. In narrow circumstances, with few outward indulgences, in great seclusion,—he yet found much to enjoy. He lived in a world of thought, above all earthly passions. He represented to himself, as the result of the Divine government, a boundless diffusion of felicity through the universe, and contrived to merge in this the horrors of his theological system. His doctrines, indeed, threw dark colours over the world around him; but he took refuge, from the present state of things, in the Millenium. The Millenium was his chosen ground. If any subject of thought possessed him above all others, I suppose it to have been this. The Millenium was more than a belief to him. It had the freshness of visible things. He was at home in it. His book on the subject, has an air of reality, as if written from observation. He describes the habits and customs of the Millenium as one familiar with them. He enjoyed this future glory of the Church not a whit the less, because it was so much his own creation. The fundamental idea—the germ—he found in the Scriptures; but it expanded in and from his own mind. Whilst, to the multitude, he seemed a hard, dry theologian,—feeding on the thorns of controversy,—he was living in a region of imagination, feeding on visions of a holiness and a happiness which are to make earth all but Heaven."

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*We are obliged by the favours of R. M. (Chard,) which came too late for insertion in the present number, but shall appear in the next.*

# THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

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JULY, 1837.

VOL. IV.

## SPECULATIONS ON THE COURSE OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY.

We intend here to pursue and conclude those speculations on the course of Christian history, which were commenced in our last number. It was then stated, as the leading fact which we desired to elucidate, that "there appear to have been four or five marked *eras* in the history of the Christian religion, distinguished from one another by the light in which the religion has been principally viewed, during the several eras, by the generality of its professors." We endeavoured to shew that, originally, in the days of Christ and his apostles, the new religion was regarded almost entirely as a system of practical morality and piety, addressed immediately to the hearts and consciences of men, for the purpose of effecting the spiritual improvement of their characters;—that this primitive era was followed by one of doctrinal speculation and controversy, in which points of belief, questions of opinion, seemed to be the chief, or almost the sole concern of the Christian world;—that owing to various circumstances, internal and external, in the state of the Church, this era was succeeded by one of complete ecclesiastical and secular domination, in which there was little or no doctrinal controversy, because there was no liberty of thought, and in which the primitive zeal for genuine moral and spiritual improvement was superseded by a blind, superstitious reliance on priestly forms and ceremonies;—that this profound slumber of the human mind was disturbed at the period of the Protestant Reformation, which introduced a new era, distinguished at first, and hitherto, by a return to the state of doctrinal speculation and contention, but to be ultimately followed, we trust, by a return to the original mode of viewing Christianity, as a moral dispensation whose only proper end is the advancement of practical piety and virtue. But to these latter topics we were merely able to allude in our former observations. At this point, therefore, we now resume the further consideration of the subject.

It is common with Catholics to reproach the Protestant world for the number of sects, for the numerous and bitter disputes, and for the various contradictory systems of faith, which have arisen out of the great movement of the Reformation. There is no possibility of denying the facts, whatever degree of justice, or otherwise, there may be in the reproach. The general consequences, if not the natural fruits, of separation from the absolute spiritual government of the Church of Rome, have been nearly the same in all countries, in proportion as that separation has been completed. There have arisen endless theological disputes; new modes of belief, fresh errors and absurdities of doctrine, have rapidly multiplied; rival sects have urged a vehement warfare of argument, have assailed each other with severe recriminations for alleged heresy, and have too often lost sight of the great practical principles of holiness and goodness, which constitute the essence of Christianity, in their blind zeal for certain narrow peculiarities of opinion. We are not prepared to admit that this result of the Reformation must be considered as altogether evil, unaccompanied with any advantages whatever. On the contrary, we are inclined to consider it as being in itself a better state of the religious world, than the superstitious slumber of the middle ages; but at all events, we are convinced that it deserves to be greatly preferred, when regarded in that which we conceive to be the proper mode of viewing it, as a natural, inevitable state of *transition*, from the dark corruptions of Popery back to the genuine purity and simplicity of the Christian profession. However, as we have said, the facts of the case are undeniable. In England, Holland, and Germany, in the United States of America especially, but in France and some other countries more partially, wherever and to whatever degree Protestantism, as consisting in revolt from the spiritual domination of the Romish Church, has prevailed,—there have been witnessed theological speculation and controversy, giving rise to almost numberless sectarian divisions. This is no remote consequence of the Reformation, but began with its beginning, and has hitherto followed it in all its progress. It is justly remarked by Mr. Hallam, that "in the theological writings of that age, doctrinal controversies respect-

ing justification by faith, the corporal or real presence in the eucharist, and other like subtleties of opinion, almost efface more important and more obvious differences between the old and the new religions,"—and that "it is rather in the general history than in the strictly theological literature of this period, we are to seek for the best characteristics of that revolution in religion, which ought to interest us from its own importance, and from its analogy to other changes in human opinion." This is true; and even so it has remained to the present time. The establishment, (so far as they are yet established,) of the great *principles* of free inquiry and liberty of private judgment in religion, has been the incidental effect, the unforeseen and undesigned consequence of the Protestant revolt, rather than the direct benefit which Protestant believers have sought to acquire, for themselves and for the Church at large. They have rather, in all their numerous divisions, employed their most strenuous endeavours, first against their common adversary, and soon afterwards against one another, to combat or to support certain theological *doctrines*, to confute real or supposed errors of speculative opinion, and so, if possible, to ensure correctness and uniformity of religious faith throughout the Christian world. The last three hundred years, therefore, have in this respect much resembled the three hundred years, (to speak loosely,) which followed the close of the second century;—they have formed an era chiefly distinguished by controversial speculation. The process which was interrupted at that period, by the domination of the Romish state and hierarchy, has been now resumed, in consequence of our deliverance from that spiritual tyranny. The various subjects of belief, either really involved in the Christian religion, or accidentally and arbitrarily associated with it, have been again submitted to the ordeal of the human intellect. And so they must continue, until they have been thoroughly examined, and truth and reason have gained their rightful ascendancy;—until the correct opinion has been proved, in every case, by irresistible argument, or, which perhaps will more frequently be the result, until the entire vanity of the dispute has become clearly manifest to all parties.

This revival, as it were, of the age of controversy, and

the seemingly protracted duration of it, have both followed naturally out of the circumstances of the Christian world at the period of the Reformation. It was impossible that the curious and exciting topics of speculation, which constitute the usual subjects of theological dispute, should not again occupy the attention of the human mind, the moment the human mind was again free to speculate;—and yet there was no such state of knowledge, theological or general, as could lead to a speedy termination of these controversies. The minds of men were little accustomed to plain and accurate methods of reasoning. The long reign of an exceedingly artificial system of logic and philosophy, had greatly perverted all the intellectual operations of the learned; whilst the unlearned were too rude to reason at all themselves, or to judge of the reasoning of others. The state of science, both physical and moral, was so low as to present scarcely any thing but a mass of absurd errors and prejudices, calculated not to assist, but to obscure the interpretation of the divine will, as contained in the Scriptures. The state of all properly *biblical* knowledge was nothing better. The materials for all sound and enlightened criticism on the sacred writings, were not yet collected. The right principles of interpretation were unknown, and every one was obliged to follow, as too many still do, the capricious fancies and inclinations of his own mind, in determining the sense of holy writ. These evils, which were attendant even on the condition of the clergy, and of the educated classes in general, have been greatly aggravated in their effects by the custom, which the spirit of the Reformation introduced, of submitting questions of Scriptural interpretation and theological controversy to the judgment of the entirely uneducated classes of men. It is possible that this practice may have had some collateral good effects, in the way of exercising and sharpening the intellects of men, and giving them a more lively personal interest in religion than they might otherwise have felt. But there can be no doubt, that it has tended to multiply and prolong vain theological disputes, and to produce, from time to time, a new brood of speculative absurdities. It has helped to bring the study of theology into disrepute with numbers of thinking and rational people. It has encouraged a blind confidence in the wildest conceits on

the part of some, and opened a way for the practice of the most artful imposition on the part of others. It has too often rendered that which ought to be one of the calmest and most dignified of all human pursuits,—the search after religious truth,—appear as an occasion for paltry and vulgar wrangling, quite unworthy the notice of a cultivated mind.

In the last place, however, we confess that our prospects of the course of Christian history would be dark indeed, if we did not look forward to the close of this revived controversial and dogmatical *era*, and anticipate a gradual return to the spirit of primitive times. Experience ministers to our hopes in this respect. Not a few of the controversies which, since the days of Luther, have divided large portions of Christendom, are now either permanently settled, or have naturally expired;—they have not, in the present instance, been violently suppressed, (in which case they might be expected to revive again,) but either a victory of truth and reason has been fairly gained on one side of the disputed question, or the question itself has been clearly discovered, and acknowledged on all sides, to be absurd or unimportant. We confidently expect a similar issue to many other questions which yet disturb the peace and harmony of the Christian world. We have no doubt, for example, that all which is really discoverable, from the united testimony of reason and the Scriptures, concerning the nature of God, the person of Christ, and the conditions of divine forgiveness, will be established to the universal satisfaction of Christian believers; and that all which is undiscoverable on these subjects, will be suffered to remain undisputed, or at least will be excluded from the topics of Christian faith. Already there are many signs of weariness and impatience with the everlasting turmoil of doctrinal controversy, in the conduct of the more sensible and serious members of all religious denominations. Already there is a longing manifested, in various quarters, for a more earnest and unanimous devotion to the true moral purposes of the Gospel, to the advancement of practical holiness, benevolence, and piety. Honest believers of all parties are beginning to feel, and as they feel strongly

they declare loudly, that Christ came into the world, not to set the minds of men at war with one another on a thousand points of idle disputation, but to save sinners, to reconcile the hearts of men to God, and to promote the spiritual improvement of their souls. It is to the conscience and the heart of man, to the moral sentiments and spiritual capacities of his mind, not to his speculative intellect, that the pure Christian religion is immediately addressed. This is its genuine character. This was the light in which it was regarded, the spirit in which it was received, in the days of its original glory, when it wrought such wonders in the conversion and regeneration of believers. In this light it must again be viewed, this spirit must again be universally awakened among its professors, before it can fully recover its pristine power, as a purifying and sanctifying dispensation of heavenly mercy. We even, of the present generation, need not despair of witnessing some further advances towards this desirable change in the state of the Church. The minds of multitudes of believers are ripe for such an improvement, though they may not very clearly apprehend the nature of the change which is necessary. It is not an agreement in men's particular religious opinions which is required, so much as a general enlightening and expanding of their views of the great, essential objects of all religion, especially of Christianity. In our humble judgment, at least, there is no reasonable ground to hope that controversial discussion will bring men to unanimity of opinion on all or most of the theological questions which now cause divisions in the Church. There is so much obscurity in the very nature of many of these questions, there is so much imperfection in the evidence by which they are to be decided, and there are such varieties in the natural endowment of men's minds, that different opinions on such subjects will probably always exist as long as the questions themselves continue to be entertained. Some doctrines, indeed, there are still in dispute among Christians which cannot well be ranked in this class. They relate to truths of fundamental importance; the evidence by which they are to be determined, is, or will be, sufficient for all unprejudiced minds;—these must therefore be permanently settled.

But, generally speaking, all which is to be absolutely required or hoped for, is, that Christians should learn to separate these mere theological opinions from religion and Christianity, properly so considered. It was so in the apostolic times, in the primitive *era* of the Church; for then it was allowed that, in matters of private opinion, every one should stand or fall to his own heavenly Master, the common Lord of all believers; it was enjoined that the weak in faith should be received, not to doubtful disputations, but to edifying intercourses of Christian fellowship and love. In those times, the worship of the one only true and living God, and the mutual exercise of brotherly affection, through the efficacy of a simple and sincere faith in Christ, were sufficient bonds of moral and spiritual union amongst all who honestly professed the gospel. When this shall again be the state of the religious world at large, we shall have fairly won our way back from those corruptions and that bondage of the Church, which form so mysterious a portion of its history. We must hope in the providence of God, and in the unquenchable spirit of the gospel, which is a spirit of wisdom, liberty, and love. Through all the difficulties to which the holy religion of Christ has been subjected, under all the clouds of error and superstition which have so thickly gathered around it, this good and powerful spirit has manifested its indomitable energies. We may confidently trust that, in alliance with all the influences of an advanced and increasing civilization, its beneficent power will in future be still more largely displayed.

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#### ON THE PREVAILING USE OF THE WORDS “SAVIOR” AND “REDEEMER.”

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It may possibly be thought by some a startling proposition, that if one of the Apostles could arise, and overhear the common religious phrases, “*our Savior*,” and “*our Redeemer*,” he would not understand what person it was intended to designate by them. Yet the New Testament affords abundant evidence that this assertion may be made with every probability of truth. It is at least certain, that

neither of these terms, used absolutely as a designation of Christ, in the way in which we now use them, occurs in a single instance in the New Testament, nor indeed in the whole Bible.

In the New Testament the word *Redeemer* is never employed at all. In the Old Testament it is in general an epithet of Jehovah, as in *Isaiah xliii, 14*, "Thus saith the Lord, your *Redeemer*, the Holy one of Israel." It is not clear that it is ever applied to the Messiah in any single instance: for in the celebrated passage of *Job*, beginning, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*," I apprehend that the soundest interpretation refers it to God. Such, then, being the state of the case in regard to Scriptural precedent, what is the state of the case in regard to the prevailing phraseology of Christians? Simply that this title has been withdrawn from Almighty God, to whom the Scripture generally appropriates it, and converted into a distinctive and proper title of the Messiah, to whom the Scripture hardly once, if ever, applies it. It is with many a favorite paraphrase, or explanation, of the Trinity, to say that it reveals God in the threefold character of our Creator, our *Redeemer*, and our Sanctifier: and in the Church of England Catechism, the child is taught to express his belief, first in God the Father who made him, and secondly in God the Son who *redeemed* him. In short, we know that with Christians in general "*our Redeemer*" is only another name for Christ, and bears no other signification. Such phraseology is at any rate grossly unscriptural.

The case respecting the term *Savior* is not quite so strong, and yet it is not much less so. In the Old Testament this epithet does not appear to be once applied to the Messiah, although it sometimes is applied to inferior human deliverers, as in *2 Kings xiii, 5*, "and the Lord gave Israel a *Savior*, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians." The title is, however, eminently and peculiarly attributed to Jehovah, who says, "*I am the Holy one of Israel, thy Savior*," *Isaiah xliii, 3*, "*I am the Lord, beside me there is no Savior*." *Isaiah xliii, 11*, &c. In the New Testament, God, even the Father, continues to be spoken of in the same style. "*My soul*

doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Luke i, 47. " We trust," says Paul, " in the living God, who is the Savior of all men." 1 Timothy iv, 10. Altogether, this title, which is not of very frequent occurrence, is attributed to God in the New Testament about eight times.

Undoubtedly, in the New Testament, the term *Savior* is also applied to Christ, and that about twice as often as it is to the Father. The following passage well illustrates its application to both. " After that the love of God our *Savior* toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our *Savior*." Titus iii, 4, 5. We see here very plainly the whole matter; God our *Savior*, in the primary and original sense, Christ our *Savior*, in a ministerial or instrumental sense. According, therefore, to the sense in which it is employed, this title may fitly be ascribed by Christians both to God and Christ, and is so employed in the New Testament. But as it is applied indifferently to both, it cannot be conveniently used as a distinctive appellation of either: nor is it so. Such a term as " *Our Savior*," standing alone and unexplained, never occurs in the Scriptures, old or new, and as far as Scriptural authority goes, is without any definite meaning.

It is true that in modern religious language we know, by experience, that the phrase " *our Savior*" means Jesus Christ, and though Paul and Peter would have been puzzled by it, still as it is become unambiguous to us, it may be asked, why it should be regarded as objectionable? It may be answered first, that as a general rule it is safest and best to make the Scripture the standard of religious language, on all the subjects that are properly its own, that is, in all matters proper to revealed religion. This seems to be the part of good taste: the same taste which distinguishes and relishes *classical* language on all other subjects. It also seems to be a part of Christian wisdom, which is aware on the one hand how insidiously the corruption of doctrine is introduced under the disguise of a change merely of phraseology, and on the other how much

the war of words, the zealous, bitter and interminable logomachies, have already vexed the Church.

But in particular and secondly, it is to be observed, that the point now in question is by no means a trifling one. It concerns great things, the attributes and titles of God, the economy of salvation, and the interpretation of several important texts. If the Almighty asserts himself, saying, “*besides me there is no Savior,*” it cannot be right that this title should be ascribed to any other than to him. Nor can it be right, in relation to the economy of grace, that we should speak as if we thought more of the secondary and ministerial, than of the primary and original author of our salvation. In regard to interpretation, we know that there are those who find a handle in this matter, and because it is established by custom that the term *Savior* indicates the Lord Christ, they think it fair to conclude that the phrase *God our Savior*, occurring in Scripture, must belong properly to him: and though their logic be bad, yet it is not without effect.

Thus a small error leads to a greater, as its tendency ever is. For error is by nature prolific, and cannot remain long single, but soon multiplies and grows beyond expectation. And this remark the writer would offer as his apology, if he be thought to have insisted unduly on an unimportant matter. It is an apostle’s exhortation, “to hold fast the form of sound words which we have heard.”

T.

## ON NATIONAL RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS, IN REPLY TO T. F. B.

*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

Sir,—Being willingly disposed to hear the arguments in favour, as well as against, a Religious Establishment, it was not without interest that I perused, and reperused, the remarks of your correspondent, T. F. B., on this subject, in your Miscellany for May; and although I admit he has shown considerable ingenuity and adroitness in his mode of reasoning, I cannot but feel convinced that he has altogether overlooked the main grounds of the

controversy, and combatted fancied objections, rather than answered real ones. Proceeding on erroneous data, he has started premises and drawn conclusions therefrom, which cannot be borne out; and in attempting to expose the plausible fallacies of others, he has fallen into the same error as the polemics he encounters. His logical dexterity more befits the apologist than the advocate; and in this character he has advanced propositions in which things essentially different are confounded together, and points assumed which ought to be proved. It is not, however, without a degree of diffidence that I venture to offer a few observations opposed to his views of the question: and in doing this, I would premise that I am not one of those clamourous Dissenters who see nothing in the Church but sheer evil, and without making due allowance for the prejudices of education, and the deep rooted attachments to ancient institutions which require time to eradicate, wish to carry every desirable reform by hasty and sweeping measures. Neither do I recognise in what is called the Voluntary principle so many excellent things as it has generally the credit for; as it must be evident to any close and impartial observer, that it has many objectionable features, which pass under high sounding names and specious encomiums.

The simple and obvious amount of the mode of reasoning adopted by your correspondent is, that as the Government has the power of raising and applying taxes for different national purposes, that power may be exercised without limit, responsibility, or popular controul;—that a Religious establishment, supported by taxation, is as much an object of legislation, as any secular institution; and that for any subject to complain of its injustice, is a meddling with matters in which he has no right to be a judge, or to express an opinion, but in which he is bound to submit, without question, to whatever is imposed by his rulers, as the test of his claim to the character of a good, loyal, and orderly citizen! The leading points of his argument, brought into this compass, carry with them their own refutation. They express the very quintessence of despotism in its most absolute form, and exhibit the doctrine of nonresistance and passive obedience in its most unqualified aspect. I cannot believe however that

the writer seriously holds such sentiments. His mistaken notions of the subject on which he writes have betrayed him into the use of language, the inferences to be drawn from which he has not duly considered. From the manner in which he has expressed his dissatisfaction at the present Church Establishment, it is evident he is even scared by his own propositions, and afraid to act upon them. If he be a Dissenter (which I presume he is) his conduct practically disputes the validity of the principles he aims to enforce, impugns the collective wisdom and discretion he assumes for the "powers that be," and violates the duties he aims to inculcate on others. He maintains it to be the duty of the private citizen to submit without question to the acts of Government, observing, that "to set up his own judgment respecting the objects of public expenditure as a test of their justice, is entirely to misconceive his civil position, and to fail in the duties which belong to it." If this be correct doctrine, then every Dissenter in the kingdom is living in the daily open failure of his duties,—not merely thinking and expressing his own views respecting such objects, and mentally calling their justice in question, but actually *practising* upon them;—not only *misconceiving* his civil position but carrying out his misconception into *operation*. Does he mean to condemn the departure from the principle he lays down as only criminal in *thought*, but not in *action*? Does he forbid to complain of the State religion as a wrong, and allow the open profession of one opposed to it with impunity? If the national religion, as one of the objects of public expenditure, is to be taken on trust, in the faith of the Government only being the legitimate judges of what conduces to the general good, surely any overt act which implies a disregard of such exclusive powers of judging, must be a bold and mischievous dereliction of social duty. But why does not T. F. B. bind himself by his own rule? Why does he not exemplify the legitimacy of his own reasoning? Instead of this, he remarks, "for my own part I shall not hesitate to say, that constituted as the Church of England now is, with all its existing dogmatism, exclusiveness, and secularity, I consider that as a bad Establishment, and one which had we no hopes of its reform, we ought to wish abolished."

What ! wish the abolition of what we ought to take for granted to a be specimen of wise legislation, which we are elsewhere told "is not a question of right or wrong, of justice or injustice"? What sort of logic is this? First make it a duty of the citizen to yield the right of judging and choosing what is fittest and best as an object of public taxation to the constituted authorities of the country,—first enjoin it upon us to assume their wisdom, and concede their masterly skill in statesmanship,—and then proclaim them as bunglers, denouncing their performance as a bad one, and, unless remodelled, fit only to become a heap of ruins !

But if all we have to do with the acts of the legislature is to yield an implicit acquiescence in their wisdom and justice, society has hitherto entertained a very mistaken view of its true position, in relation to the Government ; and the stir so frequently made by way of expressing popular opinion, discussing and petitioning, called the constitutional means of obtaining redress of grievances, can be nothing less than a daring impeachment of the competence of that Government! But what shall we say to the conduct of the ruling powers in thus suffering themselves to be openly arraigned, and actually conceding the justice of such aberrations from the line of social duty, by the repeal of the laws complained of as injurious, and thus often knocking out the brains of their own wise creations, by demolishing the very workmanship of their power, which, according to T. F. B.'s notions, was entitled to our homage and reverence, as specimens of law-making sagacity? Surely, what is once wisely done, it must be unwise to revoke or undo. If there be wisdom in one act, there must be folly in amending it by another.

The real tendency of such reasoning as your correspondent's is, to stamp the acts of Government with an authority above even that which we call divine, and, *à fortiori*, above all others. It is, in fact, to make Christianity a mere subservient auxiliary to the policy and projects of the State ;—a mass of crude materials to be fabricated into a receivable system by the sapience of human power ! Does he really profess to believe in the New Testament ? (I ask not this question insinuatingly.) Does he prefer this book to the Koran ? If so, on what ground ? Is it because of

the excellence of its doctrines, and the superior purity of its moral precepts.? But what has he to do with regulating his conduct by the maxims and rules it contains, if they run counter to any thing authorised by the State as the true standard of religious practice, since he will not allow the right to question its equity? If a Religious Establishment does not involve the question of right and wrong, or affect the conscience as to its approximation to or remoteness from any fixed principle of action, then it is preposterous to talk of taking a book for our guide, generally acknowledged as demanding our highest approval, and pre-eminent attention, as a rule of life. Indeed on such grounds were the State to adopt the religion of Mahomed, as the established religion, it would equally lay us under an obligation to obey its dictates.

In classing the means by which the Church Establishment is supported with general State taxation, your Correspondent has committed an error in the outset; and thereby indiscriminately ranked the ecclesiastical with the civil affairs of a nation. The taxes for the latter are first collected, and afterwards appropriated by the Government; the collector applies for them, and transmits them to a general fund for the public treasury, to be disposed of by a Parliamentary vote. On the other hand, the emoluments levied for the Church, are *specifically* paid, and do not come through the same channel, neither are they subject to the same mode of distribution as the taxes of the State. It would, indeed, put the clergy in a different and more precarious position, were they dependant on such a source for the revenues which they now so boldly claim as their "unalienable property." A Quaker, or any other, who may disapprove of war, cannot be affected on the score of conscience, by paying his taxes, although part of them may be expended in keeping up the army, any more than he is in discharging a common debt, because his creditor may be a profligate man, who may expend the money in gambling, or dissipate it on improper objects. But when he is called on to contribute his Church taxes, he becomes a direct participator in their application, and is made an unwilling instrument in promoting what he cannot approve, if he be a dissenter; and yet, according to the logic of T.F. B., he has no business to

complain of this as a grievance ! But since the State has thus treated the Church with a marked distinction in the manner of obtaining its funds, it clearly follows that the public are entitled, at least, to view it in the distinctive character thus recognized ; and seeing it stands on so different a footing in this respect from other institutions of Government, the argument on the score of parity falls to the ground.

But supposing the case to be as your Correspondent has mistakenly assumed, and that the clergy were paid like the army, out of the public treasury, there would still exist a disparity. The support of a military establishment, as your Correspondent intimates, is justified on the plea of the national defence ; but will he maintain the same necessity for keeping up a religious establishment ? The protection of life, liberty and property,—internal security against enemies, &c., may reasonably call for certain provisions of this nature ; but will it be said there are equal reasons for raising a privileged order of *clerical* warriors, to protect the community against erroneous opinions, and false faiths ? If the clergy are to be regarded in this light, then they have miserably missed the end for which they were quartered on the community, if the creed of the Church is the only true one ; and quite unlike the regiments under government command, instead of being the defenders of the interests of the people, they more frequently act the part of foes, and turn the weapons of their official warfare against them, as is too often witnessed in their hostile array against every measure of reform. To keep up any sort of analogy in the two cases this religious establishment ought to be the *only* allowed religion of the country ; for whilst the Government has the power and authority of keeping up a standing army, it is strictly prohibited to any private individuals independently to raise troops of their own, and very consistently, because it would tend to create civil war. To argue, therefore, that there is no more injustice in an established religion, than there is a military establishment, is to prove that all other religions ought to be interdicted ; and of course no sanction given to any priestly belligerents but such as are under State pay. If to impose a national religion be no injustice, then is it the only pure, the only genuine one,

and all opposed to it must be counterfeits. To maintain this national garrison, and at the same time give licence to troops of sectarian foes to attack it, is such a solecism in legislation as cannot be made explicable on any known principle. Either the Government Church militant ought to be abolished, or the hostile corps of sects, under private command, ought to be disbanded by royal proclamation. If equal reason existed for the support of a National Church and a military establishment, then what is called *toleration* would be nothing less than the State conniving at spiritual sedition, and thereby encouraging an open contravention of its own acts! For whatever law a state has a *right* to make, it has a right to *enforce obedience* to, and to inflict punishment for the breach of it. If then, it has the *right* to establish a Religion by act of parliament, it has an equal right to demand adherence to it, or visit a refusal with penal consequences. If it be right to tolerate men to set up another sort of worship, and publish an opposite creed, it must in the nature of things be wrong to impose an Established religion. On the other hand, if it can be shown, that in establishing it, the principles of equity are strictly observed, then Dissent would be a delinquency equivalent to desertion from the army. In a word, admit the legitimacy of T. F. B.'s reasoning, and I see not why, instead of the Government affording protection to Dissenting places of worship, the very attempt to build one ought not to be construed as incipient rebellion, and visited with consequent punishment.

With regard to such a national institution as the British Museum, as instanced to illustrate your correspondent's argument, I do not see that it has any relevancy to the case. The conduct of such as lightly esteem the pursuits of the scholar or antiquarian, and think themselves wronged by a Parliamentary grant in its support, can never be a proper criterion of the injustice of the grant. No man who would undervalue such pursuits can be considered a proper judge of their national usefulness; and on the other hand none but the ignorant would deprecate them. The advantages of this institution are the less perceived because they do not come upon us with a direct or immediate effect; and while it can do harm to none, it proves a considerable benefit to all who feel an interest in the

history of civilization, and its most important concomitants. It has none of the offensive attributes of an established church. It obtrudes not itself on public attention, in the paraphernalia of dominating pageantry, like the ostentatious parade of episcopal power and priestly arrogance. It has none of the pompous imposing names and titles by which a chartered hierarchy cheats the understanding,—passes off a fictitious piety. It possesses none of the glare of meretricious greatness, by which a mercenary priesthood, under the appellation of respectability, supply the place of moral principle. It has solid attractions which will reward its votaries, but no such allurements as entice hypocritical avarice to the ecclesiastical lottery office for its prizes. It holds out its favours alike to all seekers, but does not open a door of sordid competition to the greedy aspirants after Mammon's patronage. It enlists not into its service the selfish passions of human nature, nor forms ignoble alliance with its bad feelings under the pretext of furthering a good cause, as is too often the case with the system which offers incentives to the worst of passions, under the profession of serving the best of purposes. In fact it has no evil properties in common with an Established Religion, to render it an object of aversion, as repugnant to natural rights or social privileges, or to make it an instrument of enslaving the mind, or abridging physical enjoyments.

The British Museum is a Repository for relicts of antiquity and whatever is worthy of preservation, or rare and valuable, as the production of human art, ingenuity, and talent, accessible to all, without the impediment of official exactors; and even though few comparatively can be expected to visit it, all are indirectly benefited by it, since it is made the common source whence literary men may enrich their publications, and thus make them the means of diffusing its treasures in another form. Were such an institution exclusively limited to the admission of a certain class or description of manuscripts or works, which advocated one particular theory to be defined by act of Parliament, there might be some ground of comparison, since in the case of the established Religion we find it surrounded with barriers of exclusion in the shape of articles, creeds, and formularies; and its pretensions are

founded on the assumption that nothing without its pale can be good or unexceptionable, and that within it only are to be found the treasures of truth. To make it a parallel to the institution in question, would so alter its construction as to convert it to the very reverse of what it is, and to deprive it of the characteristics by which it could properly be called a religious Establishment, in the obnoxious sense of the terms. Let us suppose it was enacted, that instead of the present system the buildings called cathedrals and churches should be turned into receptacles or depositaries of ancient manuscripts, and other valuable aids to Biblical literature, criticism, and interpretation, collected from all well accredited sources, without partiality or invidious selection, and opened at all reasonable times, to all sects, to be made available whenever necessary, by way of perusal, extract, or copy, for purposes of promoting the unfettered attainment of religious knowledge : and that we were merely taxed in such an amount for it as would be necessary to pay certain officers a suitable salary for such an attendance as was required for proper regulations and arrangements. We should then have theology on a broader scale, or for the nation in general, what the British Museum is as limited to the Metropolis in science and literature. On the other hand, to assimilate the British Museum to the Established Church, we should have the expence of maintaining a number of men, possessing no extraordinary qualifications to distinguish them as a body, and individually in many instances scarcely rising to mediocrity in intellect or talent ; but exalted into consequence by an act of the State and certain adventitious circumstances, who with different nominal gradations, should be appointed public lecturers, one at least in every parish, and under a pretext of teaching science, philosophy, and literature, should insist upon it that only certain dogmas in the different departments of knowledge, (about which there may be a hundred different opinions) are worthy of belief ; and that any departure from, or opposition to such dogmas, should be stigmatized as pseudo, empirical, or what not, just as dissent is now denominated schism and heresy ; and that the proof thereof was to be found in a set of rules called the standard of opinion, authorised by law.

As to the subject of a National Education, which your correspondent absurdly puts on a footing with an Established Religion; if it enjoined with it the teaching of any set of religious dogmas, on which different opinions existed, it would become so far objectionable, but would not on that account be worse than no system at all. But on the supposition that the plan adopted should be confined to such a course of elementary instruction as should furnish the scholar with the *means* of improving his mind, it would be a real benefit to the community. If education has any connection with social improvement, and the progress of civilization, (which can hardly be questioned,) then it becomes a legitimate object of legislation to make provision for its extension, where obstacles now exist to its attainment. The real argument for a National Education is the fewness of those who have instruction, through the difficulty of procuring it. Being an expensive commodity, the mass of the population are debarred, through poverty, from obtaining it; this is the most cogent reason why some scheme should be adopted by way of giving them what they cannot buy. But this cannot be urged as a ground for an established Religion; unless it could be proved that none but the wealthy, or people in good circumstances, had the means of becoming religious within their reach. No poor man can excuse himself for being without piety on account of the high price of religious instruction; but for not sending his children to school he may plead the want of money. Indeed the question of a National Education is one of knowledge and ignorance; but that of an Established Church involves the free right to think and express opinions, in which it is impossible all should be agreed: and the existence of the former would be altogether incompatible with the latter. Much more might be said on this part of the discussion, but as I find my article extended to an immoderate length, I must conclude, with the intention of noticing, in a future paper, certain very erroneous inferences which T. F. B. has drawn from his premises, and of pointing out the illogical attempts he has made to establish them; requesting him, in the mean time, if he should be disposed to reply to my present remarks, to defer his purpose till he has seen the sequel.

Chard,

R. M.

## MR. MONTGOMERY'S LETTER ON THE IMPROVED VERSION.

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[A newspaper controversy, on the merits of Unitarianism and the Improved Version, has been recently carried on in the columns of the "*Taunton Courier*." Several letters have passed on both sides, but we have room only for the following able and conclusive one by Mr. Montgomery. We rejoice to see that these subjects are exciting so much attention in that very stirring and interesting place. We have no doubt of the good results]—ED.

### TO LAICUS.

SIR,—Were I not aware of your character as a man of ability and information, I should decline replying to your communication under the assumed name of **LAICUS** in last week's paper; but knowing you (from report) to be a gentleman and scholar, I am induced to offer a few remarks upon the evidence you have adduced in support of the assertion which you, in common with Mr. Bradley, have unwarrantably made, that "the Improved Version teaches a lie—that it is the imposition of designing men—and that it is no more like the Bible than is the Koran of Mahomet."

Without stopping to notice the personalities in which you have thought fit to indulge (I presume from "lack of argument,") I shall at once proceed to examine your proofs; and I think upon mature reflection you will be ready to admit that you have "spun the web of your verbosity" to a greater length than "the staple of your argument." In a word, in legal parlance, that you have "travelled out of the record." The first portion of your letter which I deem at all worthy of notice as being connected with the question at issue, namely, respecting the faithfulness of the New Version, and the integrity of its Editors, is the extraordinary and not very courteous assertion, "it may be safely left to any boy in the third year of his Greek, to contradict the unblushing assertion that this Version is corrected to *Griesbach's last Edition!*" Three words are more than enough for such a statement." Shall I supply them?—*It is true.* To establish this point I beg to offer to your consideration the following evidence: And first, respecting the general character and pretensions of the New Version, I again cite the opinion of the Eclectic Reviewers, Calvinistic journalists, upon this point. "Except in these instances and a small number of minor consequence, we find no reason to withhold the praise due to integrity and fidelity, in the general execution of the work." Mr. Halley likewise, the junior Tutor at Highbury College, [an Establishment in connexion with the Independent Dissenters] says, "I have not the slightest intention of insinuating that they (the Editors) were so monstrously wicked as wilfully and deliberately to falsify the records of Divine grace." And Dr. Samuel Parr, in a letter to Mr. Belsham, says, "I have been an attentive reader of the

Improved Version of the New Testament, and after making allowance for the zeal of all good men in what they think a good cause, I give them ample credit for a very useful work." I might adduce other and equally strong evidence as to the moral character of the Authors of the New Version, and thus rebut the imputation that their work is "the invention of designing men;" but I think *that already brought forward* is amply sufficient to acquit them of the charge of duplicity and dishonesty in the execution of their useful and laborious undertaking. Now as to your "reckless" assertion that "the transcript of a large portion of the Version would leave unexhausted the instances of the grossest departure from that learned advocate, (Griesbach,) of the faith that was once delivered unto the saints." You presume, Sir, with as little courtesy as accuracy, to state that "three words are more than enough" for my statement that the Improved Version is corrected to Griesbach's last text. In a word you insinuate *a lie*. I shall not so far forget myself as to retort the charge, but in proof of the accuracy of my assertion, I beg to quote the following statement, which I find in the catalogue of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for the year 1837, p. 75. "New Testament, in an Improved Version of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation, with a corrected text, and notes critical and explanatory. The 4th Edition, corrected to *Griesbach's last text*, with additional notes." And in the introduction to the 4th Edition, the Editors state that "they have endeavoured so to reform the Version as to bring it to a *complete coincidence with Griesbach's text*." "The Editors of the 1st Edition of the Improved Version followed Griesbach with some slight deviations. *They never professed* to follow him in every word. The Editors of the 4th Edition professed to follow him closely, and if we make allowances for misprints, and a few undesigned and perhaps unavoidable inaccuracies, I am confident that their honesty and diligence are in this respect *unimpeachable*."—(Yates's Reply to the Vice-Chancellor—Appendix) Now, Sir, in comparison with this direct testimony (*which it is for you to overturn—not by assertion, but by proof,*) to the general accuracy of the Improved Version, and its coincidence, in the later Editions, with the text of Griesbach—not only of the responsible Editors, but of a man who has distinguished himself as a Controversialist, and one who is so widely known and esteemed as a Biblical critic—the Rev. James Yates—I hold your assertion, and that of Mr. Bradley, to be not worth a rush.

With respect to the different passages which you have quoted to convict the Editors of the Improved Version of *corrupt motives*, I put it to you as a Lawyer—would the instances you have adduced convict them of *deliberate fraud* in any court of justice in the world? Even admitting (which I do not) that they have erred in the translation, can you seriously believe that such error is ground-work for so grave a charge as dishonesty of purpose? Not being aware of the existence of any passage in which the Editors translate in *order to falsify* the [Trinitarian] faith "the masculine into the neuter pronoun," I shall decline until that charge be attempted to be proved, making any reply upon the point. I only notice your other criticisms

which, even were they correct, do not affect the question, that I may guard the public from being led into error respecting the translation of the different texts you bring forward. As to the rendering of "Sir" in the "vocative of the noun which is rendered 'Lord' in the nominative," the error (if one) is to be traced *not to the Editors of the Improved Version*, but to *Newcome*, whom in this point they follow. In Matthew vii, 21. Dr. Boothroyd in his "Holy Bible translated from corrected texts of the original tongues," [the Improved Version of the Independents!] renders the term which in the Unitarian Version is translated "*Lord*" by "Master; and in ch. viii, v. 2, the same word is translated by him "Master," which by *Newcome* and the Editors of the Improved Version is rendered "Sir." In many other passages the same occurs; and in the 4th ch. of John's Gospel, the 19th verse, the same term is in the *Common Version* rendered "Sir." That this rendering is always correct I do not mean to assert, but that it is not always wrong is evidenced by the admission of Nares, who ("Remarks on the Improved Version," p. 35) observes, "not that we are at all disposed to deny that 'Kurie' may not with much propriety in some places be rendered 'Sir,' or 'Master,'" though he objects to its being invariably rendered so. You next refer to "the absurdity of making the *name* of wisdom a *subject of belief*, (John i, 12) in favour of your assertion that the Editors were "designing men"; *for that is the real question at issue, and not the critical accuracy of their translation*. Now, Sir, when you adduced this passage, it will be hardly too much for me to say, you must have been aware that your charge was groundless, inasmuch as the reading you object to, is *not* that of the *text* of the Improved Version. You have certainly in the paragraph I am noticing, adroitly contrived so to mystify your style, which from your critique upon me, I should have supposed to be the "ne plus ultra" of purity, that the public have been led into serious error respecting the passages you adduce. The Improved Version translates the term "*Logos*" (John i, 1, &c.) by *word*, (as in our common version) not by "wisdom;" and the interpretation which you ridicule, and which is that of Critics immeasurably your superiors in classical attainments, is given in the *notes*, not in the *text*; and this, Sir, in common honesty you ought to have stated, when you made the objection. As to the term "*Branch*," in the 22nd chap. of the Revelation of John, you again by your mode of expressing yourself mislead the public. The word translated "*root*," in the 5th chapter and the 5th verse, is *so* translated likewise in the 22nd chapter and 16th verse, the "*suggestion*" being in the notes; Schleusner renders the word which you say can only be rendered *root* for Romans xv, 12, and the Revelations—"e familia oriundus." If, however, I am to be called upon to prove the accuracy of every *note* appended to the Improved Version, before I can fairly be presumed to have established its general faithfulness, and *coincidence in the text with that of Griesbach*, then, Sir, I beg to say that your call will be in vain. To say that such a line of argument is conclusive would be simply ridiculous. Mr. Bradley's logic and your's, Sir, seems to have a fashion of its own. Thus—"The notes are critically

wrong," (absurd if you will) "the translation is frequently inaccurate," (your joint dictum) *ergo* "the text is false," the Version "teaches a lie," it is the "invention of designing men," and "no more like the Bible than is the Koran of Mahomet." Really, Sir, this is, *not according to precedent!* I come now to that passage of your letter in which you assert that the "unacknowledged deviations from Archbishop Newcome vie with the perversions of Griesbach." My reply to this assertion will be brief. The Editors of the Improved Version, in their Introduction to the first Edition, expressed their intention of noticing, in every instance, the rendering of Newcome, where they left it. In *almost every case they did* so, and the deviations amounted to 750, of which very many are in cases of very frequent occurrence, such as Teacher for Master, Hosanna for Save now, —so that the important alterations amount to about 400, and a large proportion of these arise from employing Newcome's marginal reading, or one proposed in his notes, instead of that in his text; and several from the changes made in Griesbach's second Edition. "There are not twenty verses in the whole work in which the variations from the Primate's Version have any close connection with peculiarities of theological sentiment. Many of the alterations are those proposed by Newcome himself. I go farther, and say, that the general spirit and character of the Translation is decidedly Newcome's." [Carpenter's Reply to Magee.] The "unacknowledged deviations," the result of accident not intention, are only *forty*, and there are not six of the slightest moment theologically considered. They were not discovered by any Trinitarian Reviewer, but by a learned Unitarian critic, Dr. Carpenter, the safest pledge that they were not "unacknowledged" to further any party purpose.

I now proceed to adduce the proof of the accuracy of my assertion, that the passage, 1st John v, 7, is a "notorious and reprobated forgery." The Eclectic Reviewers, Calvinists, [March, 1809,] thus express their opinion respecting it.—"We are unspeakably ashamed that any modern Divines should have fought *pedibus et ungibus*, for the retention of a passage so *indisputably spurious*. They are in our opinion the best advocates of the Trinitarian doctrine who join in exploding such a *gross interpolation*, and in protesting against its being still permitted to occupy a place in the common copies of the New Testament." Dr. Wardlaw, the modern champion of Trinitarianism, observes, [Socinian Controversy] "This text should have been entitled to hold the first place, had its genuineness been undisputed, or disputed as that of many texts have been on slender grounds. I fully acknowledge, however, that the evidence for the spuriousness of this celebrated passage, if it were even much less conclusive than in my mind it appears to be, would be quite sufficient to prevent me resting upon it any part of the weight of this argument." Dr. Adam Clarke remarks (*in loco*) "I must own the passage in question stands on a most doubtful foundation.. Bengel, (he continues,) who was an excellent critic and a good man, endeavoured to defend it without success. In short, (he says,) it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a Revelation, professing to have come from God." The present Bishop of Peterborough [Translation of Michaelis

notes—and Theological Lectures, part VI.] says, “this text cannot be received as genuine, except with the destruction of every argument for the integrity of the New Testament.” Bishop Tomline, [Elements of Christian Theology, vol. 2nd.] remarks, “I must own that after an attentive consideration of the controversy relating to that passage, I am convinced it is spurious.” Luther would never admit the text into his Translation, though it was put in after his death. Michaelis rejects the passage. Griesbach, whose individual opinion as to peculiar doctrines, has nothing to do, that I am aware of, with the point before us, gives up as defenceless this text, and enters into a long and learned dissertation, at the end of his second volume, to shew that it is a forgery. Sir Isaac Newton, Milton, Locke, Erasmus, Le Clerc, Harwood, Hill, Bentley, Lowth, and Porson reject the passage. Lachman, also, in his critical edition of the Greek, of 1831, omits it. Dr. Boothroyd, in *his* “Improved Version,” (the work of a learned Calvinist) omits the passage, and in the latest Translation of the Scriptures, by Granville Penn, “the book of the New Covenant,” 1836, the spurious passage is left out, and in his annotations, this writer [Trinitarian] in reference to its spuriousness remarks, “By this mass of impregnable evidence, even Matthiae and Scholz have been brought to the entire conviction which has caused them to exclude the controverted passage from their Greek texts; and to leave its further defence to that quality of pertinacity that would persist in endeavouring to establish the locality and solidity of the rainbow. To labour, therefore, (he remarks in conclusion) to confirm it as genuine in the Greek text, is in strict truth ‘to kick against the pricks.’”

I have now, Sir, concluded my case, and I believe there is not a link wanting in my chain of evidence. If, however, your critical sagacity can “detect,” aye, Sir, ‘tis an expressive word, “detect” a flaw in my argument, whilst thus personating “*the critic*,” a character to which, let me assure you, I have never put forward the slightest pretensions, I shall at once, and with pleasure, acknowledge my error. But, Sir, permit me to state that I do not mean to continue this controversy with you, whilst you write in an assumed name. Attach your real signature to your letters, and I can have no objection to reply to any observations you may please to address to me. But I shall take no further notice of any Anonymous Communications; and I may beg whilst addressing you on this point, to state that, if “*Redivivus Edward Nares*,” will give me *his* name, I shall engage to convict him either of pretending to quote a passage from a work which *I believe he has never seen*, or of a false quotation; in a word that he has quoted not from the Monthly Repository for 1809, but from Nares “Remarks,” &c., p. 3, note! One word, Sir, in explanation of my having addressed Mr. Bradley through the medium of a newspaper. Had that reverend gentleman confined himself to the subject which he was then discussing; had he even animadverted, however severely, upon the views of the religious body to which I esteem it a happiness to belong; or had he fairly criticized the Improved Version, and objected *ad libitum* to the accuracy of its Translation (and I beg to remark that this Version is not used in our pulpits, and indeed,

few comparatively of our members are in possession of copies of it.) In such circumstances I confess, Sir, had I addressed him, Mr. Bradley might, consistently enough with *clerical etiquette*, have ensconced himself behind his "dignity." But when he deliberately went out of his way to make a *false* and wanton charge against the moral characters of the Editors of the New Version, imputing to them motives which every upright mind must repudiate, it became my imperative duty to repel as *publicly* as it was made the calumnious accusation. And I have only in conclusion to state, that I shall at all times exercise the same privilege which has apparently given such offence, regardless how much it may wound the "*Dignity*," of those gentlemen, by calling upon them when they make statements inconsistent with Truth, and little allied to that "*charity*" which "*thinketh no evil*," either to retract them, or publicly to uphold assertions, which, though confidently made, they cannot prove.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,  
R. M. MONTGOMERY.

Taunton, June 3rd. 1837.

### UNION OF CHURCHES.

At a Meeting of the Members of the Fellowship Fund of GEORGE'S MEETING, EXETER, held by adjournment on the 29th MAY, 1837 :

**IT WAS RESOLVED—**

That this Fellowship Fund is disposed to enter into a Union or Association with the Fellowship Funds of neighboring congregations, either now existing or which may exist, on the basis of the following principles :

1. The Union shall be called, "Christian Union."
2. The Union acknowledges, as its fundamental principle, the divine and exclusive authority of the Scriptures as the sole Rule of Christian Faith and Practice, and the Right and Duty of Private Judgment, to the fullest extent, in their interpretation.
3. The Union shall consist of the Members of the Fellowship Funds of the several Congregations entering into it, each of such members contributing to his respective Fund not less than one penny a week.
4. The Fellowship Fund of each congregation entering into the Union shall elect Deputies in proportion to the number of its members subscribing not less than one penny a week, which Deputies, together with the Ministers of the several congregations, shall form the Council of the Union.
5. Each Fellowship Fund entering into the Union shall transfer not less than half its receipts to a common or Union Fund, to be applied by the Council in promoting the several objects approved by the Union.
6. These objects shall embrace assistance to small congregations within the District of the Union, in building or repairing their chapels, and supporting public worship, the maintenance of Sunday schools,

and occasional assistance to young Ministers receiving education within the Union.

7. There shall be a General Meeting of the Union at least once a year.

8. This Union shall not be extended beyond the south-western peninsular district, comprising Cornwall, Devon, and West Somerset, to the rivers Parret and Yeo.

**IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED—**

That the Secretary and Treasurer be authorized to enter into communication respecting a Union on the foregoing principles with the Fellowship Funds, Ministers, and Members of the neighbouring congregations, with a view to ascertain how far there may be a corresponding disposition on their part, and to report thereon to a meeting of this Society to be by them called for that purpose.

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“ *Reasons why Good Friday, Easter-Sunday, and Whit Sunday are kept; With an Account of the Twenty-Fourth of August, &c. Addressed to Children.* London, J. Green, 121, Newgate-Street; Bristol, J. Philp, 29, Clare Street; and F. W. B. Reid, Park Street. 1837.”

Mr. Bowring has in this little book, as in several former publications, displayed his tact and experience as a teacher of young children. He has here explained the sacred associations connected with Christmas day, Easter Sunday, Good Friday, Whit Sunday, and St. Bartholomew’s Day, in a very judicious and feeling manner. We can safely recommend the present publication for the use of schools and families. The following extract will show the nature and style of the book.

“ This day is kept in remembrance of our Saviour’s resurrection from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. This great event—to us the most important that ever happened—we should bear in mind every Lord’s day, which is, in fact, an Easter Sunday. When Almighty God created the world, we read that he rested on the seventh day—not that God can ever be fatigued, or need rest—the words mean this only; that he then ceased from the work of creation. Therefore the seventh day was hallowed, or made holy, and his worshippers were commanded to observe it as the Sabbath, or day of rest from worldly labour. The fourth commandment gives particular directions concerning its observance. But as Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, his disciples have agreed to keep the first instead of the seventh, as the Sabbath. This is usually called Sunday, though the Lord’s day would be a more proper name for it. “ The day that Christ arose so early from the dead” should be observed by

us with reverence, yet with joy. On that day we ought not to engage in our usual business or sports ; but we should go to the house of God, worship him there, and listen to the words of instruction which our ministers so faithfully and affectionately pour into our minds ; and the remainder of the day should be spent in a proper way, not in rude boisterous mirth, but in reading good books, or in improving conversation ; in fine weather, by taking a quiet walk into the country with our friends, to see the beautiful works of our Heavenly Father, and as far as can be done, in performing acts of kindness and love to our fellow creatures.

" But whilst every Sunday should remind us of our Lord's resurrection, it is very proper to observe one Sunday in the year for this particular purpose ;—as by doing so we are led to think more than we otherwise might of the great goodness of God, in raising Jesus from the dead.

" Our Lord was crucified at the feast of the Passover, of which we have given you an account in the last chapter. The Passover was always celebrated in the spring. The Jews to this day observe this feast at the same time we keep Easter, and Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the twenty-first of March.

" The word *Easter* is of heathen origin, and has nothing to do with Christianity. *Eastor* was a goddess of the old Saxons, and her festival was held in April, which they called Easter or Eastor's month, just as they gave names to the days of the week from their false gods. You will say that we read about *Easter* in the Bible, and so we do, once, in the Book of Acts ; but there the word should have been *Passover* ; for it is very unlikely that the holy writer of this book ever heard of an idol of the barbarous Saxons, or that he would call a Christian feast by her name."

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## COWL STREET CHAPEL, SHEPTON MALLET.

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*To the Editor of the Gospel Advocate.*

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SIR—We beg your insertion in the next Gospel Advocate, of the following statement relative to the Chapel in Cowl street, Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire.

The above Chapel having been for a long time in a very dilapidated state, it is found necessary to repair it, in order to prevent its falling into decay, and to render it more fit for the performance of public worship. The Congregation has laboured for several years under considerable disadvantage from having had only one service on the Sunday, conducted by the Minister of Ashwick Chapel, who lived about 3 miles from Shepton. But since the commencement of this year, when we engaged the services of a resident Minister, the Cause is reviving, and the number of constant worshipers at the Chapel is on the increase. Still we are quite unable to raise a sum among ourselves, adequate to pay for the necessary repairs ; and being determined to

avoid bringing the Chapel into debt, we reluctantly solicit assistance from our Friends.

It may be desirable to state that we have, this year, incurred no small expence, which the Society will cheerfully defray, in preparing and fitting up a commodious room for the Sunday School lately established among us, where more than 60 children are taught reading and writing. Besides this, a Congregational Library, supported by quarterly subscriptions, has also been added to the Chapel. Taking these things into consideration, together with the prospect of improving the Interest at Shepton Mallet, we confidently hope that those who are well wishers to the Cause, will strengthen our hearts and hands, by enabling us to accomplish the desired object.

The sum of £200 will be required to complete the repairs. Should the wealthy, and we may add the generous, Members of the Body to which we belong, be induced, with their benevolent aid, "to come over and help us," they might be the means in the hands of Providence, of promoting Unitarian Christianity in a place, where it now excites no small degree of enquiry, and where Intolerance is straining every nerve to extinguish its light and to destroy its existence.

We remain, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

Wm. COOPER,  
HENRY PAINTER, } Trustees to the Chapel.

Shepton Mallet, June 8th, 1837.

We consider the above case worthy the support of our Unitarian Friends, and we strongly recommend it to their notice.

LANT CARPENTER, *Bristol.*  
JEROM MURCH, *Bath.*

*N.B. Contributions will be thankfully received by Rev. H. Acton, Exeter; or Mr. Horwood, 31, St. Swithen's Lane, London; or by Rev. L. Lewis, Shepton Mallet.*

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